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# HYPNOIA;

OR,

THOUGHTS ON A SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING  
(ΣΤΝΕΣΙΣ ΗΝΕΤΜΑΤΙΚΗ)

OF THE

APOCALYPSE, OR BOOK OF REVELATION.

WITH SOME REMARKS UPON THE

PAROUSIA,

OR

SECOND COMING OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,

AND AN APPENDIX UPON

THE MAN OF SIN.

By John R. Hurd.

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"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein." Rev. i. 3.

"That ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and *spiritual understanding*." Col. i. 9.  
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HYPONIA

OF

THOUGHTS ON A SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING  
(EXPERIENCE OF THE AUTHOR)

OF THE

APOTHECARY OR BOOK OF REVELATION

WITH SOME REMARKS UPON THE

PAROUSIA

ON

SECOND COMING OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

AND AN APPENDIX UPON

THE MAN OF SIN

"It is not to be understood, that the author of this book, has any other object in view, than to show the necessity of a spiritual understanding of the scriptures, and that the author is not a prophet, but a student of the scriptures." — Preface.

NEW-YORK:

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## PREFACE.

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It will be perceived in the following pages, that a design is attributed to the book of Revelation essentially different from that usually ascribed to it. The Apocalypse has been generally supposed to contain a prophetic account of certain political and ecclesiastical changes in the history of the visible church of Christ ; instead of this, it is here taken to be an unveiling of the mysterious truths of Christian doctrine, with an exhibition of certain opposite errors—a revelation made by Jesus Christ of *himself*—an intellectual manifestation ; corresponding with what is apprehended to be the Scripture purport of the *second coming of the Son of man*.

This view, it may be said, deprives the New Testament of the confirmation of its divine origin, drawn from the heretofore supposed fulfilment of certain predictions, in respect to various anti-Christian institutions : the loss, however, if any, appears to be more than compensated by the support of gospel truth gained by a proper understanding of this mysterious volume. As the loss of any confutation of error, derived from the source above alluded to, must be fully counterbalanced by the forcible illustrations of doctrinal principles, to be found in the spiritual construction of this portion of Scripture ; a construction exhibiting truth under such a variety of phases, as to supersede in the mind the delusive imaginations from which all error in matters of religious doctrine takes its rise. We suppose, at least, a spiritual interpretation of this book of Revelation calculated to oppose directly not only one, two, or three erroneous systems, but to

leave no place for falsehood: so operating upon the mind as not only to substantiate the divine origin of the Christian faith, but, at the same time, to give a just view of the spirit and character of the religion itself.

It has been well observed that the occult meaning of Scripture language, "in order to have any degree of confidence reposed in it, must harmonize with the texts of Scripture which are plain and direct."\* Accordingly, no consideration is claimed for the suggestions here put forth further than they appear to be sustained by the contents of the sacred volume, taken as a whole, and comparing spiritual things with spiritual. Not only so, it will be perceived, from the number of references to, or quotations from, every part of the sacred writings, (about two thousand,) that our aim has been to allow the language of the inspired writers to make its own commentary upon the work under examination. We have taken all the books of the Old and New Testaments to be the immediate production of the same Author, whatever difference there may have been in the *penmen* or scribes. We assume the Divine Author to have been fully acquainted with the purport of his own figures of speech; to have preserved throughout these several compositions a consistency and exactness in the use of these figures, and never to have been forgetful in one portion of his work of the purpose to which the same figurative or symbolical expression had been elsewhere applied.

On these principles, a composition of divine inspiration must be presumed to be capable of supporting an exact analysis: its figurative language being susceptible throughout of the same analogical interpretation. It is not pretended that such an exact analysis has been performed in the present work; an effort only has been made towards it. Our views have been thrown out as suggestions, and so we wish them to be understood, although in aiming at brevity of expression they may in some places carry the air of assertions.

However commentators disagree in other respects, upon one point there can be no difference of opinion: all must admit the language of the book

\* Stuart's Hints, p. 28.

of Revelation to be highly figurative, and a *literal* interpretation of it to be entirely inconsistent with common sense. Being figurative, the field of construction is freely open to all; subject only to the restriction, that the sense applied be such as can be uniformly sustained, and such as is consistent with the general tenor of holy writ. The rule of interpretation must be the same; there can be no intermixture or amalgamation of exegesis: one portion, or one chapter, is not to be rendered spiritually or doctrinally, and another literally or politically.

The character given by the apostle to his own relation is professedly that of a *vision*, or waking dream; and, as such, it must be contemplated from beginning to end. The language is not sometimes that of reality, and at others that of a vision; except it be where the apostle is supposed to express some thought of his own at the time of writing, not forming part of the scene previously presented to his mind.

The style of a dream is peculiarly adapted to the purpose of the narration; admitting as it does of sudden and apparently capricious transitions from one subject to another. It affords latitude, also, to a certain *extravagance* of imagination, not admissible in other compositions; but, no doubt necessary here, for the requisite variety of figures bearing analogy with the truths or meanings to be illustrated. This unlicensed extravagance, as humanly speaking we might term it, if not susceptible of an appropriate and consistent spiritual interpretation, would place the entire composition upon a level with the wild vagaries of mental aberration; whereas, if the whole be capable, as we maintain it to be, of sustaining the test of a rigorous analysis, the conviction can hardly be withheld, that it is the emanation of an omniscient mind.

The use of the term *spiritual* in these remarks is intended to accord with that of the same term by the inspired writer himself: as, in speaking of the slaughtered witnesses, he says, (Rev. xi. 8,) "and their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which *spiritually* (*πνευματικῶς*) is called Sodom and Egypt, where our Lord was crucified:" a passage, incomprehensible otherwise than by supposing this figuratively anti-Christian city to be in



in some parts of Scripture alluded to as Sodom, in others as Egypt, and in others as Jerusalem in bondage to the Romans, where our Lord was crucified ;—there being in all these a certain analogy of character or history, coinciding with the meaning of the figure employed, while other parts of the Apocalypse represent the same city as also spiritually called “Babylon,” “that great City,” or “Mystery,”—the “Mother of Abominations.”

In the use of other terms, we disclaim any sufficient acquaintance with the writings of other commentators to be influenced by their peculiar views or expressions, having purposely aimed at keeping ourselves aloof from such influence ; on the other hand, we are far from claiming for our thoughts the authority of a peculiar inspiration or intelligence to which some have pretended. “There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding,” and whatever we do, it is to be done *as of the ability which the Lord giveth, that his name may be glorified* ; but it appears to have been the will of the Most High, to have withheld the miraculous evidences of his peculiar influence upon the mind ever since the days of the apostles, leaving every work to be tried by the test of his revealed word.

“Show me,” said Gideon, (Judges vi. 17,) “a sign that thou talkest with me.” This was the natural dictate of a cautious mind, fearful of being led away by some delusive imagination. The Hebrew champion wished to be satisfied that it was indeed the Deity who communed with him in so extraordinary a manner. There must be few writers upon revelation, who would not, like Gideon, gladly obtain a miraculous token of divine guidance ; but we have Moses and the prophets ; we have Christ and his apostles—the law and the testimony. If our constructions accord with the general tenor of what these have revealed to us, we have the token or sign, that God has *talked with us*, and not otherwise. Here is the standard of judgment, and by this criterion alone our treatment of the subject commented upon in the following pages is to be appreciated.

In the remarks made upon the passages relating to the *beast*, the *harlot*, and the *false prophet*, it will be perceived that the application made of



these figures is not of so *exclusive* a character as that generally adopted. Wherever the inspired standards of doctrinal belief (the sacred Scriptures) are least attended to, there we may reasonably look for the greatest obliquity in matters of faith as well as of practice ; but errors in doctrine are not confined to any single denomination of religionists, to any single sect or limited number of sects, or to any particular form of infidelity. The same error, under different garbs, may exist in some degree in a variety of creeds and systems. The “man of sin,” “the mystery of iniquity,” when fully revealed, may be found to have exercised an influence, greater or less, in the minds of all ; however professedly adverse the creed or platform of doctrine of the disciple may be to such influence. Such, indeed, is the imperfection of human compositions, that the spirit of error itself may have no small share in dictating the very safeguards intended to operate against it. The design of the Apocalypse is, accordingly, supposed to be that of detecting and revealing this mystery of error wherever it is to be found, as well as of developing its opposite truths.

The purport of this Revelation, contemplated in the light in which we view it, sustains, it will be perceived, in a manner not a little remarkable, the doctrine of *salvation, through the vicarious sufferings and interposing merits or imputed righteousness of a Divine Redeemer*, and through these means alone ; as a result of the all-controlling power of *sovereign grace*. To prevent, however, any misapprehension of our views in this particular, we wish it to be distinctly understood, that we regard the *moral law*, as a rule of action, eternal and unchangeable in the nature of things ; as much so as the distinction necessarily existing forever between good and evil. In the nature of things, such is the character of the Deity, that this moral law must be the rule of conduct throughout eternity ; the glory of God requiring the observance of this rule in all his rational creatures in every state of existence. Circumstances may change ; where there is no death there can be no murder ; but envy, malice, fraud, hypocrisy, pride, selfishness or covetousness, must be as hateful to a Being of infinite perfection in eternity as in time. The love of God, with all the heart, and mind, and

strength, together with a corresponding love of every fellow-creature, must be the rule of conduct hereafter, as it is the unchangeable commandment here.

As the criterion of moral good and evil must always be the same, the *motive* for adherence to this rule, apart from the difference of circumstances, is all that is susceptible of change. In this state of existence, man is, in a greater or less degree, governed by mercenary feelings, arising from fear of punishment, or from hope of reward. Hereafter the redeemed disciple can be influenced by no motive but that of gratitude (love) for evils escaped, salvation experienced, and benefits enjoyed.

Such, or similar to this, is supposed to be the change introduced, wrought or to be wrought, in the heart or mind of the disciple, as an operation of faith or of doctrinal views even in this life. The rule of moral action remains the same, but the obligation to observe this rule, in the apprehension of the believer, is entirely different. The disciple, having cast himself with unreserving hope and confidence altogether upon the atoning sacrifice and justifying righteousness of his Redeemer, feels himself bound by the strongest ties of gratitude to perform scrupulously every duty of morality ; to fulfil every obligation towards God and man ; to avoid even the appearance of evil, that he may obey, please, and glorify his Divine Benefactor ; thus judging that he that died for all, died that those that live might no more live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them and rose again.

To unfold this mystery, to enable the follower of Christ thus to discern his true and proper *position*, and the duties consequently devolving upon him, and thus to be built up in his most holy faith, while the glory is manifested to belong to God alone, is supposed to be the main design of this *unveiling* or revelation of Jesus Christ.

## NOTICE TO THE READER.

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THE first three verses of the first chapter of the book of Revelation, may be taken for the title-page; setting forth the subject matter, the source whence this matter is derived, those for whose edification it is ostensibly intended, and the individual by whom the matter is committed to writing, together with a species of *motto*, calculated to impress the minds of all into whose hands the volume may come with the importance of its contents.

The greeting is in the ancient epistolary style, and occupies the space from the fourth to the sixth verse inclusive; the communication being in the style of an epistle to certain seven churches of Asia. The seventh verse appears to contain a *proposition relative to the coming of Christ*, which, as will be seen, (§ 552,) we apply to the subject of the whole book. The remainder of the chapter details the manner in which the apostle has received his commission to perform the extraordinary task devolving upon him; a detail equivalent to the declaration of Paul, Gal. i. 11, 12: "For I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me, is not after man, for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ," δι' ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

The second and third chapters are occupied with seven distinct addresses to as many angels of churches; addresses coming not from John, but from him whose manifestation in vision had just been described. It is thus not till the commencement of the fourth chapter that the great subject of the book is entered upon.

A large portion of the first chapter may be regarded as John's *preface*; we give therefore to our remarks on this chapter, the running title of *Apocalyptic Introduction*; and to the remarks on the second and third chapters, containing the addresses, the running title of *Introductory Epistles*; having arranged and paged the matter of these three chapters in the usual form of an introduction, purposely to distinguish it.

The division into chapters and verses, however, it is to be borne in mind, forms no part of the original composition, having been adopted some thirteen or fifteen hundred years subsequent to the times of the Apostles. "The text of the sacred books," it is said, "was originally written without any breaks or divisions into verses, or even into words; so that a whole book, as written in the ancient manner, was in



fact but one continued word ; of which mode of writing, many specimens are still extant in ancient Greek and Latin manuscripts," (Intro. Bagster's C. B.) In seeking the sense of a passage, therefore, we must be governed by that of the preceding and succeeding matter, without let or hindrance from this arbitrary arrangement of human invention ; of which it has been very justly said as above, " Although the very great advantages which have arisen from it, in facilitating references to particular passages, has caused its almost universal adoption ; it must be confessed that these divisions and subdivisions are not always in the happiest manner, many passages being severed that ought to be united, and *vice versa*."

The analytic manner in which these thoughts are given to the public, has arisen from the necessity of the casé. It was proposed to exhibit the Apocalypse as a doctrinal work, to be understood in a certain spiritual sense, and in doing this, to employ a uniform rule of analogical interpretation ; the value of this rule depending upon its capability of application to the entire piece of composition. In order to ascertain and to set forth these peculiarities, it became requisite therefore to examine the character of every passage, verse by verse, and clause by clause, that no important portion should escape attention, or appear to be intentionally passed over.

The general course of interpretation pursued here, has been first to ascertain the proper natural or literal sense of the term or figure employed, as understood in the time of the apostle ; and afterwards to search for the analogous spiritual meaning. In pursuing this investigation, the writer has availed himself only of such helps as were within his immediate possession : for the aid received from these he has been careful to give due credit where the occasion seemed to call for it ; and he cannot express too strongly his sense of the important services performed in the cause of truth, by the laborious researches and patient labours of the lexicographers, compilers of concordances, and collators of editions and manuscripts, to whom the Christian world are so much indebted.

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P. S. In making quotations from the English Scriptures, we have put the words italicized in our common version into parenthesis ( ), and those which we have ourselves substituted, or proposed to change, into brackets [ ] ; italicizing only such words as we wish to render particularly emphatic.



# APOCALYPTIC INTRODUCTION.

THE REVELATION

ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ

OF

ST. JOHN THE DIVINE.

ΙΩΑΝΝΟΥ (ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΛΟΓΟΥ).

§ 1. THIS title is not admitted in some editions of the Greek, nor is it noticed in the English Concordance of Cruden, or the Greek of Schmidt. It is generally believed to have been added by a later hand, (Rob. Lex. 301,) and may have originated from the endorsement on the outside of a scroll, afterwards inadvertently copied as the commencement of the manuscript. The Greek term *Θεολόγος*, the theologian, injudiciously rendered divine, is applicable to any writer treating of the Deity, *qui de Deo, deisve disserit aut loquitur*, (Suiceri Lex.,) but it is not in keeping with the style or character of John, the Evangelist, to give himself the title of saint, or of divine, or even of the theologian. As little can we suppose him to have styled the work *his* Revelation; either as a revelation of himself, or as something revealed by him. Even those by whom this title was first introduced, could have intended nothing more by it than to distinguish the volume or scroll as something committed to writing by this apostle, vouched for by him, and therefore called *his*.

## CHAPTER I.

Vs. 1, 2. The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass: and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John, who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἣν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ Θεός δεῖξαι τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ ἃ δεῖ γένησθαι ἐν τάχει, καὶ ἐσήμανεν ἀποστείλας διὰ τοῦ ἀγγέλου αὐτοῦ τῷ δούλῳ αὐτοῦ Ἰωάννῃ, ὃς ἔμαρτύρησε τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅσα εἶδε, ὃς ὅσα τε εἶδε.

§ 2. 'The Revelation of Jesus Christ.'—Here we have the proper title of the book—a title which may also be rendered, THE UNVEILING OF THE ANOINTED SAVIOUR. The name Christ signifying the *anointed*, and Jesus,

the *Saviour*. The word translated revelation also implying the removing of a cover or veil, from *καλύπτω*, to hide or cover. As Matthew x. 26, and Luke xii. 2, "There is nothing hid, or veiled, or covered, which shall not be revealed"—unveiled, or uncovered—alluding, apparently, to the mysteries of the Gospel subsequently to be unfolded—mysteries veiled under the old dispensation, but unveiled in *Christ*. As it was said of the children of Israel, 2 Cor. iii. 14, "Their minds were blinded, for until this day the same veil remaineth, untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament, which is taken away in Christ." This apocalypse of Jesus Christ is therefore a revelation or unveiling, which he makes of himself—an exhibition of his own real character and offices—a revelation, or discovery, such as he made to the two disciples going to Emmaus, Luke xxiv. 27, when he expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself—a revelation of things once hid from the wise and prudent, but now revealed, even unto babes; and a revelation of himself, and of God manifested in him, of which he says, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will *reveal* him," Matt. xi. 27.

The character of the revelation about to be contemplated, then, is that of a development of *doctrinal truth*, a development set forth in figurative language, and illustrated by a variety of imagery, to be understood only in a spiritual sense. The period of this understanding we suppose to be that alluded to, Luke xvii. 30, as "the day when the Son of Man is revealed," (*ἀποκαλύπτεται*,) or unveiled—an opposite development is alluded to, 2 Thess. ii. 8, as the uncovering of the mystery of iniquity, "and then shall that wicked be *revealed*, or *unveiled*." The revelation of the Son of Man, spoken of in Luke, being an opposite of that of the *man of sin* predicted by Paul;—events to be understood in the same sense, and probably to take place contemporaneously.\*

§ 3. 'Which God gave him.'—It was committed to Jesus Christ to exemplify in himself, in his sufferings, death, and resurrection, as well as in the doctrines taught by him, the truths of salvation, the mysteries of all that economy of grace, by which, it is said, mercy and truth are met together, and *justice* and peace have been reconciled to each other, (Ps. lxxxv. 10,) as he himself says, (John xxvii. 4,) "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." This work being a *revelation* of the Redeemer in his person, as God manifest in the flesh, in his offices, as the propitiation for sin, and as the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

\* The Greek term *apocalypse*, in all its various forms in the New Testament, is almost uniformly applied to an intellectual revelation. According to the Septuagint it expresses the sense of the same Hebrew word, which we render in Leviticus by *uncover*, and in the prophets by *reveal*.

Jesus Christ is here spoken of, we may presume, as a distinct person, because it is not till the truth of salvation is entirely developed, that the Son is exhibited as giving up the kingdom unto the Father, and God himself is manifested to be all in all, (1. Cor. xv. 28,) as in fact He must necessarily have been from all eternity.

‘To show unto his servants.’—The work of Christ, although completed or wrought out at the time of his resurrection, may still be considered *a thing covered*, or veiled;—its hidden meaning, or that which is to be taught by it, being but imperfectly understood. This meaning we suppose it to be the design of the Apocalypse to uncover, or make known; the Holy Spirit, or Comforter, teaching and bringing the things of Christ to remembrance in two ways: first, after the didactic manner of the Apostles in their epistles; and secondly, by the pictorial illustrations of this book of revelation.

‘His servants.’—The word translated *servants*, may signify any description of bondmen or slaves, and is thus applicable to all the followers of Jesus, *purchased by his blood*. Freed from sin, and redeemed from the consequences of sin, but bound to Christ. ‘To show to his servants,’ is to show to the whole household of faith, but especially to those whose duty it is to instruct others, stewards as well as domestics. The steward of those times being generally a confidential slave or servant, a fellow servant of those to whom he was to give their meat in due season.

§ 4. ‘Things which must shortly come to pass’—or to be of a sudden, or suddenly brought forth—the adverb *ταχύ*, sometimes *ἐν τάχει*, including the idea of suddenness, (Rob. Lex. 745)—things to be developed at an unexpected moment, in such a manner as to flash conviction on the mind. So we find the Greek term *ταχυθάνατος* rendered *subito moriens*, dying suddenly; (Lex. Suiceri ed. Tiguri 1683;) corresponding with what is elsewhere said of the sudden coming of the day of the Lord, as in *the twinkling of an eye*.

‘And he sent and signified by his angel to his servant John.’—The Greek term, translated *angel*, is literally a messenger, and any means, by which the Divine will is communicated, may be said to be a messenger of God. The elements, diseases, and even death, are such messengers. The angel of death is sometimes so spoken of—we should speak more correctly in saying, *the angel Death*, for death is virtually the messenger to call us from this state of existence. According to Hebrews ii. 2, the prophets were angels, or messengers; as it is said, If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, how much more must be so the word of Him who speaketh from heaven. Sometimes we may consider the communication itself as the angel; they are all ministering spirits, and a spirit revealing the things of Christ must be a ministering spirit. We must form our judgment of the kind of angel alluded to in Scripture, by the circumstances of the case in which



the term is employed. Here it appears probable that the angel sent by Jesus in this instance is the spirit of revelation, which shows the things spoken of to the apostle. As it is said of the Holy Spirit, (John xvi. 7,) "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you : but if I depart I will *send* him unto you." So we may say when the Deity opens the mind in a vision of the night, that this vision is a messenger, or an angel of God.

'Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw'—alluding to the record before given by this apostle in his gospel and in his epistles ; as if the question had been asked, What servant John is this ? The answer is, It is John the Evangelist. He who bore witness concerning the word, or Logos, (John i. 1-4,) and who recorded both in his gospel and in his epistles, that which he himself witnessed of the works, and doctrines, and sufferings of his Divine Master, (John xxi. 24, and 1 John i. 1.) The declaration thus identifies the writer of these different productions, and indicates in some degree a correspondence, or relation between these Scriptures ; all being written, as we say, by the same hand.\*

V. 3. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein : for the time is at hand.

Μακάριος ὁ ἀναγινώσκων, καὶ οἱ ἀκούοντες  
τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας, καὶ τηροῦντες  
τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ γεγραμμένα· ὁ γὰρ καιρὸς ἐγγύς.

§ 5. The word rendered *read* is compounded of a word signifying to know, or to be acquainted with. It may apply to the recognition of the sense of a passage, as well as to the reading of it. So the hearing must be a hearing of the heart, or mind, applicable to a comprehension and willing reception of the truth ; the hearing alluded to, (Hebrews v. 11,) where dulness of hearing is put for want of understanding. So the keeping may be a holding in custody—something more than mere remembrance—a keeping of something valuable. "If any one keep my saying," or word, "he shall never see death," (John viii. 51.) Reading and hearing, here, are not equivalents, as in common parlance we consider reading a discourse equal to hearing it. This reading seems to be rather a recognition of the authority of the revelation ; the hearing, a comprehension of the hidden meaning. He that receives the revelation of Jesus in his propitiatory character as the purpose of God ; who comprehends how it is, that he, who was himself without

\* It may have been in allusion to the peculiar distinction with which the apostle was to be favoured as the recipient of this revelation, or as the eye-witness of this exhibition, of Christ, that the answer was given to Peter, (John xxi. 22,) "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee ?" John, however, we find so far from assuming upon this distinction, the title of saint, or divine, styles himself the servant, the slave or bondman of Christ—one bound by indissoluble obligations of gratitude to his master ; as a captive, (*servatus*;) saved from death by his captor, was held bound to devote his life to the service of his preserver.



sin, is made sin for us, that we may be made the righteousness of God in him ; and who cherishes, and rests upon, the gospel assurance of this gracious provision ;—such a one is happy or blessed ;—happy in faith even in this life ; as it is said, (Ps. cxlvi. 5,) “ Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help,” (as the Lord his righteousness,) “ whose hope” (for salvation) “ is in the Lord his God,” (in the merits of his Redeemer.)

§ 6. ‘For the time is at hand, or is near.’—The reason given for this *happiness* in reading, hearing and keeping, is that the time is at hand. We find at the end of the book, (Rev. xxii. 10,) the same reason given for not sealing the sayings of the prophecy, viz. that the time of developing the truth is at hand. The happiness contemplated arises from the full development of the glad tidings of salvation, now about being made. The mysteries which prophets and kings desired to see and hear, and which angels desired to look into, are now to be exposed to view ; at hand, because contained in this book. If the contemplation of them is not actually enjoyed, it is not because they are not at hand, but because those who have possession of the volume do not yet see, and hear, and keep its precious contents in the sense alluded to. The time indeed is at hand in a more literal sense, as the moment of death approaches ; the moment of transition to that state of being where we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known. But in the meantime, happy is he that recognizes in this revelation of Jesus Christ, his Saviour God, his strength and righteousness. Happy is he who understands the mysteries of redemption here set forth ; or rather he who is prepared to understand them. Happy he who leans upon the words of this prophecy, and conforms his faith to the views of the plan of redemption here displayed. Such we may suppose are not far from the kingdom of heaven, if they may not even be said absolutely to see it.

Vs. 4-6. John to the seven churches, which are in Asia : Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come ; and from the seven spirits which are before his throne ; and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.

Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, and his Father ; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Ἰωάννης ταῖς ἐπὶ ἐκκλησίαις ταῖς ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ· χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄντος καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἐπὶ πνευμάτων, ἃ ἔστιν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἀπὸ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστός, ὁ πρωτότοκος τῶν νεκρῶν καὶ ὁ ἄρχων τῶν βασιλείων τῆς γῆς· τῷ ἀγαπῶντι ἡμᾶς καὶ λούσαντι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμασιῶν ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐποίησεν ἡμᾶς βασιλείαν, ἱερεῖς τῷ Θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ, αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων ἀμήν.

§ 7. This greeting is of two parts. The division between the two being in the midst of the fifth verse, where the verses should have been separated. The first part is an ejaculatory prayer, that those to whom the epistle is addressed may enjoy the benefit spoken of ; and the last part is a summons to those receiving the epistle, to unite with the Apostle in an ascription of

praise to Him, who is the instrument in procuring the grace and peace alluded to.

‘John to the seven churches which are in Asia.’—The Apostle sets forth what he is about to write, as an epistle addressed to certain churches. Not, as the whole tenor of the book afterwards shows, that this epistle is intended merely for the edification of those bodies, or assemblages, but as a person writing a book for the instruction of young persons may put forth his publication in the form of letters to his own children. The design declared in the first verse, (*to show unto his servants, &c.*), and the universality of the blessedness spoken of in the third verse, confirm this supposition. At the same time we must attend to the peculiar characteristics of these churches, in order to have a better understanding of the matter laid before them.

These seven churches of Asia have long since passed away; and if we except that of Ephesus, scarcely any mention is made of them in other portions of Scripture. Paul, also, addressed epistles to *seven* churches: the Roman, Corinthian, Galatian, Ephesian, Philippian, Colossian, and Thessalonian, besides his epistle to the Hebrews; but of these only one, the Ephesian, corresponds in name with a church of the Apocalypse. If we view these assemblies as types, it is unimportant what seven churches are selected. We have only to bear in mind the peculiar features of each; if not types, it is difficult to imagine why Paul should have selected seven churches principally in Europe, and John seven churches in Asia. As to the number *seven*, it seems to express a certain totality, *ad infinitum*. Every circle being equal to seven circles, and each of these seven circles divisible into seven other circles, and so on. Thus the seven churches of John, and the seven churches of Paul, may represent alike, *the whole Christian church*.

§ 8. ‘Grace unto you, and peace.’—Grace, *χάρις*, *gratia*. Free, unmerited favour, something the opposite of wages, or of debt, (Rom. iv. 4.) The law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Something freely granted through Jesus Christ, and only through or by him. The grace of God which bringeth salvation, (Titus ii. 11,) being also styled the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, (Acts xv. 11, and elsewhere.)

*Peace*; reconciliation with God, obtained through the blood of the Lamb, (his Son,) as God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, (2 Cor. v. 19.) Hence a peace passing understanding, (Phil. iv. 7,) a peace with God, but obtainable through Jesus Christ, and through him only, (Rom. v. 1.)

It is important to bear the peculiar characteristics of these terms in our minds, that we may compare the consistency of this apostolic benediction with the general tenor of the revelation subsequently made.

‘From him which is, and which was, and which is to come;’ or, from the being, the was, and the coming. That is, from God himself; the giver of every good and of every perfect gift; and, indeed, the only being who can, strictly speaking, be said to *give* at all: all other beings only act as his instruments. He has not only a right to do as he pleases with his own, but all things being his, he has a right, and he alone has the right to do with all things according to his will and pleasure. Hence, the grace or favour coming from him is termed *sovereign grace*, consisting in the exercise of a power of perfect sovereignty.

§ 9. ‘And from the seven spirits that are before his throne.’—After what has been just said, it seems inconsistent indeed, to enumerate seven other sources of grace and peace. The subsequent revelations of this book, however, will probably reconcile this seeming inconsistency. Meantime we may advert to what we have remarked (§7) of the number *seven*—that it represents a *totality*. The seven spirits before the throne of God, are *all* the spirits—before his throne. To be before the throne of God is to be in a position of peculiar favour. These seven spirits are, then, all the spirits thus favoured; and the whole seven constitute in fact but one spirit—one spirit thus favoured, or in favour; and this we may presume to be the Holy Spirit, which is not otherwise here mentioned; but which, according to Paul, is a joint source of the same blessing of grace and peace, or is something equivalent to it: as he says, 2 Cor. xiii. 14, The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost (Holy Spirit) be with you all. These seven spirits must be, therefore, seven elements, or operations of the Holy Spirit employed in the work of conferring grace and peace.

§ 10. ‘And from Jesus Christ.’—Another inconsistency—unless Jesus Christ himself be identic with God the Father; for there cannot be two sovereigns of the universe, or two sources of sovereign grace. The common form of this benediction in Paul’s writings is, *Grace to you and peace from God*, (our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,) as we think the words should be read; the two persons last mentioned being spoken of in parenthesis, qualifying or explaining the appellation given to the Deity. The translators of our common version, however, have uniformly supplied the word *from*, immediately before the person last named, so as to make it appear that the grace and peace are from two sources, when the apostle apparently intends to set forth, expressly, but one source. Jesus Christ, indeed, is said to be especially *our peace*, (Eph. ii. 14–16,) but this might be interpreted only as being so instrumentally; whereas, in this passage of Revelation, the three, the Father, the Seven Spirits, and the Lord Jesus, are set forth as *coequal* sources of the same grace and peace; corresponding with the declaration, 1 John v. 7, “There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.”



‘The faithful witness.’—Of the two other members of the triune source of grace and peace, it may be said that the apostle confined himself to pointing them out distinctly—God, as the eternal being, and the Holy Spirit, as the seven spirits before the throne ; but when he comes to mention the last member, Jesus Christ, whose unveiling is to be the subject especially of his book, he gives an epitome of his character, his dignity, his work, the results of his work, the glory due to him, and the manner in which this glory is to be manifested at his second coming.

A faithful witness, that is, a witness worthy of full faith and confidence. “It behooved him to be made like unto his brethren ; that he might be a merciful and *faithful* high priest,” (Heb. ii. 17,) that is, a high priest to be depended upon. We call a martyr faithful when he dies at the stake in adherence to his testimony, although he may be in error ; we cannot, therefore, depend upon the testimony of a martyr in this respect ; but with Jesus Christ there is no danger of mistake—in whatever testimony he bore, all doctrines taught by him while in the flesh, and all taught by him, through his apostles, are so much testimony of which he is the witness ; but besides this, we are now about *to go into his testimony* in the book before us. It is important, therefore, that we should establish our minds in the conviction that the witness about to testify, is one that cannot be mistaken, and will not deceive. He is a faithful witness—worthy of unlimited confidence.

§ 11. ‘The first begotten of the dead’—or rather the first *born* from the dead ; ὁ πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν. We are apt to make use of these terms *begotten* and *born* as equivalents. We speak of regeneration as a new birth merely, and we speak of the resurrection of Christ here as a new generation ; whereas there is a marked distinction between the ideas to be conveyed in the two cases.\* *To be born* implies a previous existence ; but to be begotten, or generated, does not admit the idea of previous existence. It cannot be correct to say that Jesus Christ is the first *generated* from the dead. Accordingly the same Greek term which is here translated begotten, is rendered Col. i. 18, by the word *born*—“the first born from the dead”—and in no other place of the New Testament is expressed by *begotten*, except Hebrews i. 6 ; where it should have been rendered by the word *born*, as it there refers in a figure to the bringing in of the remedial plan of propitiation, as an event taking place in the Divine mind at a particular moment ; although we know that in the Divine mind the purpose must have been eternally the same.

The reason given in Colossians for this precedence of Christ, in his birth from the dead, is, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence, (πρωτεύων,) *the being first*, in allusion we suppose to the specimen afforded by the *first fruits*—Christ taking the lead, as we may say, in the process of

\* As there is a similar distinction between the Greek verbs *τίκτω* and *γεννάω*.



resurrection, as he had done in the work of redemption :—typifying in a spiritual sense his resurrection from the position of condemnation, to which he had subjected himself in man's behalf, and exemplifying, in a material sense, his triumph over the powers of corruption ; spiritually, affording the disciple an assurance of justification in him ; and physically, an assurance of a re-existence in an incorruptible, *material* body of flesh and bones ; such as he was seen to have, Luke xxiv. 39. The disciple of Christ, adopted in him, and accounted to partake of his merits, and to be conformed to his image, being raised from a position of death in trespasses and sins, of which Christ's resurrection is the earnest or first fruits. As it is said, (1 Cor. xv. 13–17.) If Christ be not risen, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins—while at the same time his material resurrection, as a *first fruit*, is a sample of the *material* re-existence of his followers. The word *Ἀπαρχή*, rendered *first fruits* in our common version of this passage, in Corinthians strictly signifying *first part*, or sample piece, (Rob. Lex. 55.) As in a lump of leavened dough, if a piece taken from the outside be leavened, it is a proof that the state of the whole lump corresponds with it ; the process of leavening having commenced from the centre. As the first piece is, therefore, so is the whole ; as is the fruit, so is the tree ; as are the branches, so is the stock ; as was the material resurrection of Christ, so will be that of his followers—not in manner, however, but in kind.

§12. 'The prince,' or rather the ruler (*ὁ ἄρχων*) 'of the kings' or chiefs 'of the earth.'—We have not yet reached the commencement of the apostle's description of the vision, and cannot yet say that the language and figures here employed, are those of *vision* ; but we may say, that the language is already *figurative*, and that the term kings of the earth signifies here something else than political rulers, in the ordinary sense of the term ; as we find Paul uses the expression, 1 Cor. iv. 8, somewhat sarcastically perhaps : " Now ye are full, now ye are rich, *ye have reigned* as kings without us." So Jesus Christ says, (Luke xxii. 21,) " Behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Opposite to which we may suppose the kingdoms of the earth, or of the world, to be something *within* the disciple, opposed to the reign of God in the heart. " The Lord is our King," it is said Is. xxxiii. 22, " He will save us." Earthly sovereigns were formerly looked up unto by the people, in a time of trouble, and were trusted in for their power to save. Kings of the earth may thus represent supposed means of salvation, and as the *earth* is an opposite of heaven, the kingdoms of the earth must be opposites of the kingdom of heaven ; and the kings of the earth we may consider leading principles of these kingdoms of the earth ;—leading principles of economies of salvation opposed to the economy of grace : all which leading principles are subordinate, and subservient to the manifestation of the power of Christ. The element of salvation by grace, through the imputed

righteousness of Christ, predominating over the principles of all earthly schemes of redemption. As it is said of those justified in Christ, Col. ii. 10, "Ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power;" who also, it is added, (vs. 14, 15,) "in blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances," "spoiled principalities and powers:" as Christ is also said, Eph. i. 21, to have been "raised far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named." So it is said of disciples, (Eph. vi. 11, 12,) that they "wrestle not against flesh and blood," (human power in a literal sense,) "but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world." These quotations sufficiently showing that kings and kingdoms of the earth, or of this world, are figurative terms, even in portions of Scripture where we might suppose the literal sense to be more strictly adhered to.

We have thus in this designation of Christ, as the source of grace and peace, three important particulars: that he is a witness to be depended upon; that he is the earnest of the resurrection from the dead, both in a spiritual and in a material sense; and that as a Redeemer, his power predominates over every other principle.

§ 13. 'Unto him that loved us.'—We now come to the reminiscence of the great cause of gratitude; as it is said, (1 John iv. 19,) "We love him because he first loved us." And 1 John ix. 10, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." And as Paul expresses it, Gal. ii. 20, "The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." So Rom. viii. 35–37, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us." The love of God and the love of Christ being uniformly spoken of in Scripture as identical; the passage which exhibits one, applies equally to the other; as we shall perceive more fully in the progress of this development of the character of our Redeemer.

§ 14. 'And washed us from our sins in his own blood.'—As it is said, 1 John i. 7, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin; and this for the reason afterwards given, that he is the propitiation for our sins, (1 John ii. 2;) as it is also said 1 Cor. vi. 11, "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." The washing in the *name* of Christ, being an expression equivalent to that of being cleansed by his blood.

§ 15. 'And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.'—What we have just now said of kings, is equally applicable here. It is evident that the term is not to be understood in a literal sense. For if all the followers of Jesus were kings, they would be kings literally without subjects. The peculiar characteristic of a king amongst the Hebrews was that of being

anointed, or set apart. So the kings of Israel were styled *the Lord's anointed*. In which respect a king was a type of Christ, who is pre-eminently the anointed of the Lord, spoken of, Ps. ii. 2, and lxxxiv. 9. In which respect Christ himself also represents all who are adopted in him, (Ps. xviii. 50.) To be a king, therefore, in this spiritual sense, is to be the Lord's anointed, set apart in Christ; and in him reigning and triumphing over the powers of the earth, opposed to the salvation of the sinner. Such an anointing appears to be alluded to by David, Ps. xcii. 10, as an anointing of *fresh oil*; that is, an unction in a spiritual sense, as contradistinguished from the literal oil, with which as king he had been before anointed.

Priests were also anointed ones; as Moses poured oil on Aaron's head, Lev. viii. 12; but priests were also admitted to sacrifice at the altar, and the high priest, by virtue of his office, entered even the Holy of Holies. So, in Christ, the disciple, in a spiritual sense, is admitted to all these privileges. In Christ, he serves in the temple of God; in Christ, he offers his body an acceptable sacrifice; and in Christ, he is admitted even into the holiest; identified, or accounted identic in the sight of God with his Divine Redeemer. It is thus *in Christ* only, that disciples are kings and priests; and this *to God*, not to man, or in the sight of men.

The word translated king, is said to have been originally applied to one who presided over sacred things, (Rob. Lex. 104.) According to some editions of the Greek, however, this word should be rendered a kingdom, or a royal dignity, (Rob. Lex. 101;) and the word priests without the conjunction seems to be intended in apposition, and not in addition, to the preceding term—*et fecit nos regnum, Sacerdotes Deo et Patri suo*—(G. & L.) And has constituted us a *royal dignity*, that is, priests, &c., corresponding with the royal priesthood, spoken of, 1 Peter ii. 9. As Christ was a priest after the order of Melchizedek, a royal priest; so *in him* his followers are accounted priests of the same order. As Melchizedek brought forth the offering of bread and wine, so Christ brings forth the sacrifice of his own righteousness, the bread of life, and the offering of his own atoning blood, the wine procured from the water of purification; and so the disciple in Christ is accounted to offer to God perpetually the sacrifice of his Redeemer's merits; the bread and wine of eternal life.

§16. 'To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, amen.'—To him, that is, to Christ, as appears by the Greek order; and yet we are told that God will not give his glory to another, (Is. xlii. 8.) We are thus continually reminded that the Father and Son must be two exhibitions of the same Deity. The ascriptions of the apostle John being no doubt in strict accordance with that of another apostle, (Jude 25,) To the only wise God and our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. The word *be* is supplied by our translators; perhaps the sense would be



better expressed by the word *is*. To him *is* the glory and dominion, for ever and ever. So let it be. The glory belongs to the Saviour, and *is* and will be his whether any of his creatures should give it to him or not ; and this the apostle declares positively : He has loved us and washed us from our sins, and made us a royal priesthood, and to him *is* the glory. And so it should be, adds the apostle. Amen, so let it be. It is even to teach us that this glory and dominion is his, that he unveils, or reveals, himself to us, especially in the following pages.

V. 7. Behold he cometh with clouds ; and every eye shall see him : and they also which pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so. Amen.

Ἰδοὺ, ἔρχεται μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν, καὶ ὄψεται αὐτὸν πᾶς ὀφθαλμός, καὶ οἵτινες αὐτὸν ἐξεκέντησαν· καὶ κόψονται ἐπ' αὐτὸν πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς· καὶ ἂμήν.

§ 17. 'Behold, &c.'—Here the apostle, as if carried away by the transport of his feelings, anticipates apparently the great subject matter, as we apprehend it to be, of the revelation committed to him ; that of the *second coming*, or manifestation of his Master ; as if he had said, In the revelation about to be made, the coming of the Lord is to be found. He that loved us is there about to unveil himself. He that hath done so much for us is now, amidst the types and shadows and figurative language of this book, as amidst the clouds, about to manifest himself ;—to reveal his love and the mysteries of the work of his salvation. Here, in this revelation spiritually interpreted, he is coming to the understanding.

The coming of the Lord is expressed in sixteen places of the New Testament, by the Greek word *παρουσία* ; in two, by the word *ἐρχόμενος*, and in one, 1 Cor. i. 7, by *ἀποκάλυψιν*,\* which last term is the same as that rendered *Revelation* in the title of this book. There can be no doubt that all these terms relate to the same *coming*. So the Greek term *apocalypse* is rendered Rom. viii. 19 by *manifestation*, and 1 Peter i. 7 by *appearing*, while in the 13th verse of the same chapter of Peter, it is translated by *revelation*. Comparing the two verses together, it is evident that this apostle considered the *appearing* of our Lord Jesus Christ and the *revelation* of Jesus Christ as identic, and consequently to be expressed by the same *term* ; and it is equally evident that what Peter terms an *apocalypse* is that which Paul terms *parousia*. The word *apocalypse* is also made to express (Luke ii. 32) light, or enlightening ; while the *appearing* of Jesus Christ, termed 1 Peter i. 7, *apocalypsis*, is expressed in other places by the word *ἐπιφάνεια*, a *shining upon*, (1 Tim. vi. 14.) An exhibition of brightness, which, according to 2 Thes. ii. 8, is to destroy *that wicked*—the man of sin ; then to be simultaneously revealed, unveiled, (*ἀποκαλυφθήσεται*.) The *coming* of this *wicked*

\* "So that you come behind in no gift ; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ : who shall confirm you unto the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."



being expressed in the Greek by the same word *parousia*, as that employed most frequently to express the coming of Christ. In both cases the words coming, revelation, and appearing, or brightness of coming, being nearly equivalent terms, or at least terms to be understood in the same spiritual or intellectual sense. We hence take it for granted that the *coming of Jesus Christ* is the revelation of Jesus Christ, and this revelation of Jesus Christ, is precisely the title of the book we are now about to examine. Accordingly the expression, Behold, he cometh with clouds, is equivalent to the declaration, Behold, he is about to be *revealed* with clouds.

§ 18. God is said (Ps. cxi. 7, 8,) to cover the heaven with clouds; clouds being represented as a *veil* spread over the heavens. The heavens, it is said also, display the glory of God, and the firmament his handy-work. Analogous to this, we suppose the heavens, in a spiritual sense, to be that exhibition of Divine sovereignty which manifests the glory of God, in his goodness towards a lost world; and his power in the work of redemption. As the clouds, in a literal sense, veil the material heavens, and partially or entirely prevent our contemplation of celestial objects; so, in a spiritual sense, we may give the appellation of clouds to whatever conceals wholly, or partially, from the human understanding the wonders of redemption. Such concealment is undeniably produced by the types and symbols, and figurative language, in which a large portion of Divine revelation is handed down to us.

‘I have many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now,’ (John xvi. 12)—this was said even to the most favoured disciples of our Lord, and so probably it might have been said to his followers ever since that time. Our mental vision is not yet capable of sustaining the brightness of a full manifestation, or shining forth of the Sun of righteousness. God in mercy has covered his revelation of truth, with a cloudy veil; we see as yet only *through a glass darkly*, (1 Cor. xvi. 12,) but no doubt we are permitted to see as much as we are able to bear.

Previous to the coming of Christ in the flesh, the *cloud* may be said to have been one of thick darkness, (Joel ii. 2, and Zeph. i. 18.) But the light of divine truth has since been progressively revealing itself, becoming brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. In the present day the understanding of the symbolic language of revelation is much advanced. The heavenly exhibition is still veiled by a figurative mode of expression, but partially understood. We may say, however, perhaps, with the prophet, (Zech. x. 1,) “The Lord hath made bright clouds.” In the account we have of the *transfiguration* upon the mount, where Moses and Elias were seen ministering to Jesus, it is said, Behold, a bright cloud overshadowed him, Matt. xvii. 12. So, when we see the law and the prophets ushering in a development of Gospel mysteries, our Redeemer may be spoken of as veiled only with a cloud of brightness. On the other hand, when the

understanding has no perception of Jesus, as the Sun of righteousness, it may be said to be a day of thick clouds.

But while the figures and symbols of Scripture are the instruments of a temporary veiling or concealment of the mysteries of Divine goodness, they are also the instruments of handing down and of promulgating the knowledge of this goodness. The knowledge of the Lord is to cover the earth, and this result is to be brought about by the use of these means ; so it is said, Ps. iv. 3, " He maketh the clouds his chariot." These types and figures, when properly understood, become the vehicles of setting forth the true character of Jehovah. This proper understanding we suppose to be comprehended under the figure of his coming in, or with the clouds.

§ 19. ' And every eye shall see him.'—That is, intellectually, corresponding with the petition of the apostle, Eph. i. 17, 18, " That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation (*αποκαλύψεως*) in the knowledge of him, that the *eyes of your understanding* may be enlightened ; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." To every one, possessing this spirit of wisdom, or thus enlightened, Christ may be said to come intellectually, or to be seen coming as in the clouds, or with clouds.

§ 29. ' And they which pierced him.'—The word translated *pierced*, is the same as that used (John xix. 37) in reference to the action of the soldiers, who, in piercing the side of Jesus, unwittingly provided for the fulfilment of the prophecies : Ps. xxii. 16, " They shall look on him whom they pierced ;" and Zech. xii. 10, " And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication : and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son." The looking upon the pierced one is here spoken of as a consequence of the pouring out of the spirit of grace and supplication. As such it may be equivalent to the operation of the Spirit spoken of (John xvi. 8) as the conviction of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.

*Literally*, the body of Jesus was pierced by a single individual, a Roman soldier ; and even those who nailed him to the cross were but a few soldiers acting by command of a superior, *not knowing what they did*. In a spiritual sense, however, all have pierced him, on account of whose transgressions he was wounded, (Is. liii. 5.) An understanding contemplation of the relation between the iniquities of the sinner and the sufferings of the Saviour, is probably what is alluded to as the looking upon him whom they pierced. The disciple sees his crucified Lord not merely as one who was pierced, but as one whom he himself has pierced.

' And all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.'—It can-

not be those rejoicing in Christ as a Saviour, who mourn at the prospect of his coming; on the contrary, their language is, *Even so, come, Lord Jesus*. The Greek term rendered here *wail*, and according to the Septuagint in Zech. *mourn*, signifies primarily, *to cut one's self*; reminding us of the manner of the priests of Baal, (1 Kings xviii. 28.) It seems to be the characteristic of idolatrous worship, expressing the lamentation of vexation rather than of affection; and we may suppose such lamentation of vexation and disappointment, to be the wailing of the kindreds of the earth, on the occasion here contemplated. Their position corresponding with that of the persecutors of the martyr Stephen, when, sitting in council and looking steadfastly on him, they saw his face as it had been the face of an angel; and when, cut to the heart by the truth of his statements, they gnashed upon him with their teeth, Acts vi. 15, vii. 54.

So the opposers of gospel truth may wail, when they behold the truth they oppose, decidedly demonstrated to be truth. The opposers of the doctrine of salvation by grace, may wail when they perceive this doctrine about being manifested as *truth*. And the despisers of this salvation by the imputed merits of Christ may wail when they behold Jesus about exhibiting himself openly, and as it were face to face, as *the Lord our righteousness*. So also those who go about to establish, or who, as they think, have established, and who depend upon a righteousness of their own for salvation, must mourn as one mourneth for a lost son, when they find this means of dependence, this source of vainglory cut off, and destroyed, by the exhibition of the truth as it is in Jesus.\*

§ 21. The word here rendered *kindred*, (*γενῆαι*), is the same as that translated tribes, Matt. xxiv. 30, "And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn." According to the Jewish mode of speaking, we suppose the tribes of the earth to represent something the opposite of the twelve tribes; as in figurative language the earth represents something the opposite of what is represented by heaven, and the kingdoms of the earth are put for opposites of the kingdom of heaven. As the *twelve tribes* represent something chosen, adopted, and set apart, so the tribes of the earth may be supposed to represent things not so chosen, adopted, and set apart. When the truths of the gospel are being manifested, then, as we apprehend, the principles of the economy of grace may be called upon, figuratively speaking, to lift up their heads; while on the other hand it may then be said to be the part of the

\* 'As one that mourneth for a lost son.' Children are a heritage of the Lord; analogous with this, the means of justification are also an heritage of the Lord: the inheritance of the merits of Christ by imputation. Children thus representing that righteousness, or merit, which is necessary to justify. The self-righteous man, when convinced of the nothingness of his pretensions, thus mourns, or wails over his loss, as if for a *lost son*.



principles of self righteousness, personified as the tribes of the earth, to wail because of him. The correctness of this construction, however, may be better appreciated as we advance in our examination of the peculiarly mystic language of this portion of the inspired writings.

‘Even so, amen’—or, yea, so let it be—as assuredly such will certainly be his *coming*, (Rob. Lex. 29 and 467.)—The word *amen*, here and in the preceding verse, appears designed to indicate the completion of the topic immediately preceding it. So at the end of the sixth verse, the summary of what Christ had done is completed. Then comes a summary also of what he is about to do; which is also completed at the close of the seventh verse; after which, the sense admits of a considerable pause. We may also consider this seventh verse as having immediate reference to what is said at the close of the third verse—“For the time is at hand,” “Behold, he cometh.” The time is at hand, because the revelation contemplated is to be found in the succeeding pages; and, behold he cometh, because this revelation constitutes his coming.

V. 8. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Ἐγὼ εἰμι τὸ Α καὶ τὸ Ω, λέγει κύριος ὁ θεός, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ὁ παντοκράτωρ.

§ 22. It will be perceived by comparing the English with the Greek text, as above, that there is some slight difference in the Greek editions. The common version omits the word God, (ὁ θεός,) and adds the words the beginning and the ending, (ἀρχὴ καὶ τέλος,) while the Greek edition from which we copy,\* omits these last words, and adds ὁ θεός to the term *κύριος*. This difference is not material, as the letters *Alpha* and *Omega*, the first and the last of the Greek alphabet, express all that is expressed by the beginning and the ending; and the closing term—the *Almighty*—shows the speaker to be God, whether it be so expressed before or not.

‘I am Alpha and Omega.’—We infer that these are the words of him that cometh, but it is not absolutely so declared. The same annunciation, however, is found in three subsequent passages: Rev. i. 11, xxi. 6, and xxii. 13. The process of development is here just commencing, and we are gradually let in to a knowledge of the true character of Christ, as we are also into that of the peculiar functions of his mission and ministry. We learn here that he who styles himself the Alpha and Omega, is the *Almighty*, the eternal Lord God—which is, and was, and is to come. If we afterwards find the same title to be assumed by, or given to Jesus Christ, putting the two together, we find him declared to be the Eternal God, the

\* N. T. G. post *Tittmannum*. Ed. Robinson, New-York, 1842, with Heyne's variations.



Almighty.\* But this announcement is at present delayed, as it were, because in the present stage of the revelation we are not yet able to bear it. Meantime we may notice that this title, Alpha and Omega, as the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, has something *finite* in it, leading one's mind to a characteristic of the speaker, distinct from that of his Eternity. With God, the Almighty, contemplated only as the Supreme Being, there can be neither *beginning nor ending*, (Heb. vii. 3.) We are obliged, therefore, to look for something of which it may be said that the Almighty God is the beginning and the ending in a peculiar sense; and this something we find or shall find in the Economy of Grace. Christ, that is, God manifest in Christ, being peculiarly the beginning and the ending of the plan of redemption—the author and the finisher, the first cause and the final cause. The economy of grace being designed to glorify the Saviour, as the woman, it is said, was created for the man, and not the man for the woman, (1 Cor. xi. 9.) The church being called into being for the Redeemer, and not the Redeemer for the church. Elsewhere, as Hebrews xiii. 8, we find the same attribute ascribed to the Son as is here given to the Father Almighty. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; that is, who was, and is, and is to come.

V. 9. I John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Ἐγὼ Ἰωάννης, ὁ ἀδελφὸς ὑμῶν καὶ συγκοινωνὸς ἐν τῇ θλίψει καὶ βασιλείᾳ, καὶ ἵπομονῃ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἐγενόμην ἐν τῇ νήσῳ τῇ καλουμένῃ Πάτμῳ διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ διὰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

§ 23. Here the narrative is introduced, with an account of such particulars of the writer and of his circumstances at the time of writing, as must place the genuineness of the production beyond dispute. The apostle claims for himself no consideration of superiority—he is a *brother*—adopted in Christ; every disciple is a brother, for all so adopted are brethren, by virtue of that spiritual tie. He is a companion in affliction—literally, he was so in those times of persecution; spiritually, he was so, because every sinner is, in himself, in a position of affliction, although in Christ he is in a position of rejoicing, which last state is expressed by companionship in the kingdom of Christ. The Greek term signifying a participation of fellowship—literally, as an avowed disciple and follower of Jesus—and spiritually, as participating in the communion of his merits, sharing in the benefit of justification by his righteousness, and of purification by virtue of his atonement.

He was a participator also in the patience of Jesus Christ; or rather in the *patient waiting for Christ*, this being the interpretation given to the

\* The letters *A* and *Ω* serving as a key to interpret, or rather as a chain to connect together these several titles.

same Greek word, 2 Thess. iii. 5. Not that the apostle affected to share in the endurance of Christ literally, but that there is a patience or endurance which every Christian is called to exercise for Christ's sake, and which on this account is called the *patience* of Christ.

To these particulars of himself, the apostle adds the name of the island in which he was residing at the time of receiving the vision, and of committing it to writing, and the cause of his being a resident of that secluded spot. Thus furnishing a geographical and an historical criterion for testing the reality of the circumstances, and for identifying the period of this remarkable revelation.

The Island of *Patmos*, one of the Sporades, is mentioned by Pliny and Strabo; and the apostle's account of his confinement in the island, corresponds with the tradition of his banishment to it by order of the Emperor Domitian, (see Leusden's *Onomas. Sac.*) From what is said of the familiar terms upon which this disciple stood with some of the Jewish authorities, it appears probable, that the regard in which he was held by many of his countrymen, instrumentally procured for him this commutation of banishment for death, at a time when his life might otherwise have been scarcely spared. The name of the island signifying something *deadly*, (*lethalis vel mortifere*, according to Leusden,) may have been derived from its barrenness, or want of salubrity, rendering it so much the more probable that such would be the place of confinement of a persecuted disciple. So, as the providence of God overruled the circumstance of the apostle's intimacy with the high priest, to enable him to witness the trial of his master, similar circumstances were overruled to place him in a position favourable for writing his vision, and for promulgating it with these evidences of its authenticity.

Perhaps without these coincidences, from the highly figurative language and imagery employed throughout the Apocalypse, the book would not have commanded that respect for its authority which has been so universally rendered to it for nearly 1800 years.

It required, more than any other portion of the New Testament, peculiar evidence of its having been written by an apostle; and even evidence pointing out the particular apostle. Some specification of circumstances was necessary to connect it with what was known of the writer's life, as a kind of preliminary proof to entitle it to attention, and to procure for it the critical and laborious investigation of pious and learned commentators; an investigation bestowed upon it in a very remarkable degree, notwithstanding its apparent extravagance of diction. The book *properly understood*, will, no doubt, maintain its own authority; but, in the mean time, had it not been for this announcement of the time when, the place where, and the individual by whom it was reduced to writing, its contents might have been taken

for the wild vagaries of some visionary enthusiast. The Isle of Patmos, then—standing as it still does, a rock in the midst of a well-known Sea—performs the important part of a *voucher* for the authority and genuineness of this revelation, or unveiling of himself, made by Jesus to his beloved disciple. This testimony becomes still more important, if we consider the peculiar manner in which John is here favoured, as the distinction implied in the words, *If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?* John xxi. 22, 23.

## THE VISION.

Vs. 10, 11. I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and what thou seest write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

Ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ, καὶ ἤκουσα ὀπίσω μου φωνὴν μεγάλην ὡς σάλπιγξ, λεγούσης· ὁ βλέπεις γράψον εἰς βιβλίον, καὶ πέμψον ταῖς ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησίαις, εἰς Ἐφεσον καὶ εἰς Σμύρναν καὶ εἰς Πέργαμον καὶ εἰς Θυάτειραν καὶ εἰς Σάρδεις καὶ εἰς Φιλαδέλφειαν καὶ εἰς Λαοδικεάν.

§ 24. 'I was in the spirit on the Lord's day.'—There is no article in the original preceding the word translated spirit, and the form of expression is the same as that employed in Matt. xvii. 23, "How then doth David *in spirit*" (ἐν πνεύματι) "call him" (Christ) "Lord?" that is, how does David, speaking in a spiritual sense, or having his mind translated into that state which presents a spiritual view of the subject, call Christ, Lord?

The word rendered *Lord's*, is the adjective form of *Κύριος*; it occurs but in one other place of the New Testament, 1 Cor. xi. 20, *κυριακὸν δεῖπνον*, where it is rendered the Lord's supper, in contradistinction to *every one his own supper*, and is not found at all in the Septuagint. In Latin it is correctly rendered by the word *dominicus*, and strictly speaking we should either say the Lord-Day, the Lord-Supper, or render the passages by a græcism or latinism, the kyriacal or dominical day. If we choose, however, to render the term by a noun in the possessive case, we have the same right to translate *κυριακὸν δεῖπνον*, by the supper of the Lord, as we have by the Lord's supper; and we should render *κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ* as justly by *the day of the Lord*, as by the Lord's day. This distinction would not be so important, were it not that we are accustomed to associate with the term *the Lord's day*, the first day of the week; and with the term *the day of the Lord*, something equivalent to the second coming of our Saviour. Accordingly, it is usually supposed that the apostle in this passage represents himself to have been in a peculiarly devotional frame of mind, on a certain first day of the week; a construction apparently far short of the real meaning.



The verb *γίνομαι*, from which the word rendered *I was* is derived, is susceptible of a variety of modifications of meaning, conveying, for the most part, an idea of generation, transition, or change of state, something more than is signified by the English verb *I am*, or the Greek *εἰμι*, *to be*, (Rob. Lex. 125.) So Rev. viii. 8, the third part of the sea *became* (*ἐγένετο*) blood; and Rev. iv. 2, and immediately *I became* in spirit—*ἐν θείῳς ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι*.

Taking these particulars into view, we seem to be warranted in the conclusion that the apostle's meaning here is, that upon the occasion referred to, he was brought into such a state of mind that he was, in a spiritual sense, present in the *day of the Lord*—he was enabled to witness that day. In spirit, or by the spirit,\* he was brought to see this day, which he calls the dominical (*kyriacal*) day; not in the sense in which our almanac makers employ the term, but in the sense in which it was understood by the apostles—the day of the Lord being peculiarly the Dominical Day. So Jesus says to the Jews, “Your father Abraham (in spirit) saw my day; he saw it, and was glad.” As Paul also was, we may suppose, *in spirit*, “whether in the body or out,” enabled to hear unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for man to utter. So we may suppose the apostle John to have been in spirit enjoying in vision the coming of his Lord; with this difference, however, between the two cases: that the beloved disciple was directed to commit to writing what it was not lawful for Paul to utter, 2 Cor. xii. 1–4.

If we suppose the *kyriacal* day to be merely a first day of the week, there seems to be no sufficient reason why it should be mentioned, and we are obliged to suppose the whole vision of the apostle to have been witnessed, if not committed to writing, on one particular first day of the week; but if we consider the term as designating the day of Christ, the mention of it throws light upon the whole contents of the book; while we may easily suppose the witnessing and recording of the revelation to have occupied the apostle's thoughts and time during a large portion of his banishment.†

\* *ἐλθὲ ἡγὼ ἐν πνεύματι θεοῦ*. If *I by the Spirit of God*, it is said, Matt. xii. 28.—So it may be said here, *I was by the Spirit in the day of the Lord*—or verbatim, *I was in the Spirit in the kyriacal day*. The only question will then be, what did John understand by the *kyriacal* day? We suppose it to be *the day of the Lord*. How far this reading is consistent with the whole tenor of the vision will appear in the sequel.

† The term, *the Lord's day*, is not to be met with in any other place or passage of Scripture; and even as it occurs here in our common version, we find it classed in Cruden's Concordance, with *the day of the Lord*. The day we call Sunday is uniformly designated in the New Testament as the first day of the week. In the Old Testament, its typical equivalent appears to be that spoken of as the *eighth day*, (Lev. xxiii. 36–39.)

The Sabbath, or Sabbath-day, as we commonly use the appellation, is a term uniformly applied both in the Old and New Testament to the seventh day of the



§ 25. ‘And I heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet.’—A voice we may suppose like the sound of a trumpet.

Of the coming of the Son of Man it is said, (Matt. xxiv. 31,) “And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” So, 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52, “Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet—for the *trumpet* shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed;” and 1 Thess. iv. 16, “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the *trumpet* of God.” Here are three several predictions of the coming or manifestation of Christ, attended with the voice, or sound of a trumpet. The first is that of a *great sound* of a trumpet, such as the sound which John now hears behind him. The second speaks of the *last* trumpet; we have no account of a *last* trumpet, so called, in Revelations; but, besides the sound of this great trumpet, we have seven trumpets spoken of; concerning the seventh or last of which, it is said, (Rev. x. 7,) that in its sounding, the *mystery of God should be finished*. The third prediction is that of the voice of the archangel, and of the trumpet of God. We know that the trumpet of God is not the trumpet of man; and we may judge that it signifies not a material trumpet, but some revelation, or instrument of revelation from God, analogous to the voice of a trumpet. So the voice of the archangel must be the voice of one who is the ruler, the chief of the angels; and we have, at the commencement, and at the close of this book of Revelation, the assurance that it is a communication by the mouth, or voice, as we may say, especially of the angel of Jesus; that is, Jesus himself speaking through his angel; and may not this be equivalent to what Paul denominates the voice of the *archangel*? *At least*, may there not be some intimate relation between the trumpets alluded to by Matthew and Paul, and the trumpets described in the Apocalypse?

The trumpet was generally employed amongst the Hebrews for public proclamations and for martial preparations, and even the walls of the city of Jericho were overthrown by the sound of trumpets, Joshua vi. 4–20. The victory of Gideon was obtained instrumentally by the sound of trumpets, Judges vii. 19–22; and the ark of the Lord was brought up to the city of David, with trumpets, and cymbals, and shoutings. With these references we cannot but believe that there is something of more than an ordinary importance to be attached to the employment of the apocalyptic trumpets. The

week. Consequently we may say, the term *Lord's day*, as applied to a particular day of the week, although such use of it may be sanctioned by very early authority in the church, cannot strictly speaking be considered a Scripture term.

trumpet is peculiarly the instrument of a herald, indicative of a proclamation by sovereign authority ; any revelation of the divine will may be spoken of as such a proclamation, and may be thus figuratively termed the voice of a trumpet, or the trump of God. The Greek verb *κηρύσσω*, translated preach, and applied particularly to the preaching of the gospel, is a term primarily signifying the action of a herald in proclaiming the will of the sovereign as with the voice of a trumpet. The promulgation of the legal dispensation is spoken of, Hebrews xii. 19, as the voice of a trumpet ; and may be said to be a trumpet of God. So the preaching of the gospel may be called the sound of a great trumpet, or the trumpet of a god. Several developments of gospel truth may be each of them termed the voice of a trumpet, and the last of these, the final revelation which God may make of his will, may be equally spoken of as the sound of the *last trumpet*, the trump of God, the last proclamation of the will of the Divine Sovereign, as by a divinely commissioned herald. To these suggestions we may add, that the universally admitted extreme old age to which the apostle John was permitted to live, and the probability that the revelation he committed to writing was received towards the close of his life, (as supposed about A. D. 96,) warrants us in the assumption that this revelation is the last promulgation of the will of God, made directly to man—the last divinely inspired communication by a commissioned herald ; and as such it may be appropriately spoken of as the last trumpet, or the great trumpet. The sound of this trumpet is its meaning. This sound has not yet reached us, or we have yet heard it only indistinctly, as we hear the distant thunder ; and even, if that exhibition which the Apocalypse affords us of the true character and offices of Christ, constitutes what is called his *parousia*, or coming—something compared to the lightning which lighteth from one part of heaven to the other—the brightness of this exhibition may precede, in some degree, the full understanding of the truths presented by it, as the dazzling brilliancy of the electric fluid bursts upon our sight while we wait, as it were, the sound of the distant explosion for an interpretation of the cause of our astonishment.

§ 26. ‘Saying,’ [I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last:] ‘what thou seest write in a book.’—The words within brackets are not to be met with in all editions of the Greek, and are excluded from that from which we copy. They do not appear necessary here, but whether omitted or retained, the sense of the passage is not affected, and their limitation, when used, to the economy of salvation, has been already noticed, (§ 22.)

‘And send it to the seven churches which are in Asia.’—Here follow the names of these seven churches. The apostle addressed his epistle to them in the first instance ; he now gives the reason why he did this, viz., that he was so directed. He is to send, too, an account apparently of all that he sees to these seven churches ; although, as we afterwards find, he

has beside a particular message for each of them. Their number, *seven*, as we have suggested, (§ 7,) making it probable that they are put for the whole church—as we find, from the preamble in the third verse of this chapter, that all are blessed who read, hear, and keep the words of this prophecy. The particular designation by name of the seven churches, may have been made that the origin of the book might be traced from its first emission, and its authenticity and genuineness thus early established. Seven copies of the whole, in the apostle's own hand-writing, being put forth simultaneously, and being carefully treasured up no doubt by these seven churches as repositories. The manuscripts afterwards transcribed could be compared by the early Christians with these seven originals, by which means a multitude of faithful copies was provided for—while each church, vouching for the fidelity of its own manuscript, may be supposed to have watched, with jealousy, the copies transcribed from it. The book is noticed, it is said, as early as A. D. 107 and 108, by Ignatius and Polycarp; by Justin Martyr, A. D. 120; at which time we may easily suppose all the originals to have been accessible to the writers of the age. The extraordinary contents of the volume at the same time must have prompted the early Christians to satisfy themselves of the correctness of its expressions and figures, and this they would naturally do, as has been since done, with the more curious research in proportion as a literal construction was put upon its language.

Vs. 12-16. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me, and being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks (one) like unto the son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire, and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace: and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

Καὶ ἐπέστρεψα βλέπειν τὴν φωνήν, ἥτις ἐλάλει μετ' ἐμοῦ· καὶ ἐπιστρέψας εἶδον ἐπὶ λυχνίας χρυσεύς, καὶ ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ἐπὶ λυχνίων ὅμοιον υἱῷ ἀνθρώπου, ἐνδεδυμένον ποδήρη καὶ περιεζωσμένον πρὸς τοῖς μαστοῖς ζώνην χρυσήν· ἡ δὲ κεφαλὴ αὐτοῦ καὶ αἱ τρίχες λευκαὶ ὡς ἔριον λευκόν, ὡς χιών, καὶ οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτοῦ ὡς φλόξ πυρός, καὶ οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ὅμοιοι χαλκολιβάνῳ, ὡς ἐν καμίνῳ πεπνρωμένοι, καὶ ἡ φωνὴ αὐτοῦ ὡς φωνὴ ὑδάτων πολλῶν, καὶ ἔχων ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ αὐτοῦ ἑπτὰ ἀστέρας ἐπὶ, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ ῥομφαία δίστομος ὅς ἐστι ἐκπορευομένη, καὶ ἡ ὄψις αὐτοῦ ὡς ὁ ἥλιος φαίνει ἐν τῇ δυνάμει αὐτοῦ.

§ 27. 'And I turned, &c.'—This turning of the apostle seems to confirm the supposition that the voice did not at the time announce the speaker as the Alpha and the Omega. If it had, we may suppose he would not have turned—he would have remained as if transfixed with awe, waiting to hear what direction was to be given him; whereas, hearing a great sound as of a trumpet, with an abrupt direction *to write*, &c., the first impulse was naturally to turn, and see who gave the direction.



‘I saw seven golden candlesticks.’—Not seven lights, but seven stands upon which lights may be placed. The seven candlesticks are declared in the 20th verse to be seven churches; but we cannot suppose seven ephemeral assemblages of disciples, in as many towns, or cities of Asia, to be *literally* so peculiarly the objects of divine care that they above all others should be thus distinguished.

Here we are to remember in the outset that this is a vision, and that whatever is heard, as said in the vision, is a part of the vision, as much as whatever is seen. The interpretation in a vision of an object there contemplated, is as much a part of the vision as the thing interpreted. Such interpretation we therefore style the language of vision, being something which itself also is to be interpreted. Every thing seen or heard in vision being symbolic of something else, and to be so uniformly considered. The candlesticks are declared to be churches, but this is an interpretation in vision; the term *church* is now a figure of vision, a symbol as much as a candlestick. These churches are typical of something of a spiritual character, analogous both to a church and to a candlestick. A candlestick is the recipient of the light placed upon it, and the instrument of conveying that light to others. So these seven churches were *literally* the recipients of this revelation, and the instruments of conveying its light intellectually to others. But as assemblages of human beings, we may consider them symbols of assemblages of principles, or elements of doctrine, doctrinal systems; instruments of exhibiting and imparting spiritual light.

The material of these candlesticks was of gold—the peculiar characteristics of gold are its preciousness and its capability of withstanding the test of the assayer or refiner. When submitted in the crucible to the action of fire, it is melted, but not destroyed; pure gold in this respect resembling, and we suppose representing, pure truth—truth without alloy, capable of abiding the test of the revealed *word of God*, an instrument of trial compared to *fire*, (Jer. xxiii. 29.) These golden candlesticks or churches represent, therefore, something of which the composition is truth, pure truth, gospel truth; for this is that kind of truth which is peculiarly precious, and which we regard as so contemplated under the figure of gold throughout this vision.

§ 28. ‘And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man.’—The candlesticks are the recipients of light, and the instruments of imparting the light they receive to other objects. The “like unto the *Son of Man*” can be no other than a representation of Christ, who himself assumed this appellation. His position in the midst of the candlesticks indicates the kind of light with which these candlesticks are to be supplied. He is the true light, John i. 9; the light of the world, John viii. 12. It is to be inferred, therefore, that the purpose of this light in the midst of these candlesticks is, that they may be supplied with light, and that continually.

Light is spoken of in Scripture in three different senses : light, in a physical or natural sense, being literally light—light, in an intellectual or metaphorical sense, being an illumination of the mind or understanding, knowledge—and light, in a spiritual or analogical sense, being that glory of moral perfection or righteousness which belongs only to the character of the Deity, and which can be imparted to any of his creatures only by his own free act of imputation. The Son of Man, as God manifest in the flesh, represents especially this spiritual light ; he is clothed with it as with a garment. To be in him is to be in a position of light, participating in the glory of this moral perfection ; to be out of Christ, is to be in the position of spiritual darkness, entirely without this glory of divine righteousness. We contemplate the Son of Man here especially as the source and fountain of this spiritual light. The seven candlesticks we suppose to be seven instruments, assemblages of true principles, designed to exhibit and hold forth this spiritual light ; as the candlestick is not the light itself, neither does it bear light for its own use, but is the instrument of manifesting the light placed upon it. As the Son of Man is represented in the midst of these seven candlesticks, so God is spoken of by the prophet as in the midst of the spiritual Jerusalem ; which herself may be considered as in a position equivalent to that of these golden candlesticks—I, saith the Lord, will be a wall of fire round about her, and will be the glory in the midst of her, (Zech. ii. 5.)

§ 29. ‘Clothed with a garment down to the foot.’—The peculiarity of this array is the entireness of the covering, its amplitude and sufficiency. Such is the righteousness of Christ—it is sufficient, abundantly sufficient, for all to whom it may be imputed. Unlike the merits or righteousness of man, of which it may be justly said, “The bed is shorter than a man can stretch himself upon, and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it,” (Is. xxviii. 20.) This garment down to the foot, may be considered equivalent as a figure to the coat of Jesus, without seam, woven from the top throughout, spoken of, John xix. 23 ; a symbol of the spiritual robe of his perfect righteousness ; its allotment among his persecutors representing that purpose of sovereign grace by which his merit is freely imputed, even to those who were the cause of his vicarious suffering. As it is said, Prov. xvi. 33, “The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.” So the same clothing down to the foot was represented on the mount of transfiguration as the raiment white as the light, Matthew xvii. 2 ; indicating the light of the glory of that divine righteousness, of which the Son of Man in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks appears as the never-failing source and supply. The robe of the High Priest (ποδήμας) was of the same ample character, (Rob. Lex. 611,) in typical allusion, no doubt, to this garment of salvation of the great High Priest of our profession.

‘And girt about the paps,’ or towards the paps, ‘with a golden girdle.’—The position of the girdle may indicate the avocation of the wearer. The high priest ministering at the altar, or the intercessor at the throne of grace, we may suppose to have his robe girded towards the breast or upper part of the chest ; but the disciple, whose part it is to agonize, to strive, and to run the race set before him, must be girt about the loins.

The girdle, however, in both cases, must be of the same material—the master and the disciple, the intercessor and the worshipper, must be alike girt about with *truth*, Eph. vi. 14. The golden girdle, precious, pure, and incombustible ; something upon which entire reliance may be placed ; as it is said, Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and Faithfulness the girdle of his reins, Is. xi. 5.

§ 30. ‘His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow.’—That is, we suppose, the hair of his head, of his eyebrows, and of his beard, were white. Hair being of the nature of a covering, and the colour white, representing perfect moral purity, or perfection, the covering of the face and head may be considered as corresponding with the entire covering of the garment down to the foot, being part of the same figure of amplitude and completeness ; showing the Being here represented to be complete in the array of moral perfection. As it is said of the Redeemer, in view of his qualifications for the work of salvation, he put on righteousness as a breast-plate, and a helmet of salvation upon his head ; and as it is said of the disciple, in allusion to the benefits resulting from adoption in Christ, Col. ii. 10, “Ye are complete in him.”

‘His eyes were as a flame of fire.’—Fire is the agent by which the purity of metallic substances is tried ; so it is said of the Most High, (Ps. xi. 4,) His eyes behold, his eyelids *try* the children of men ; and Prov. xv. 3, whose eyes are in every place beholding the evil and the good. I beheld, says the prophet, (Dan. vii. 9, 10, 13, and 14,) till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool. His throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire ; a fiery stream issued and came forth from before him. Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. We can hardly bring these passages together, without looking upon the Ancient of days as identic with the Son of Man, allowing only for the difference, that Daniel sees the same Being in his exalted state, which John saw in his mediatorial character. In the one case, God being manifest on the throne of his majesty ; in the other, God manifest in the flesh, according to the mystery of godliness spoken of, 1 Tim. iii. 16.

‘And his feet like brass, as if they burned in a furnace.’—The burning appearance of these feet indicates the tendency of the progressive develop-



ment of the character of Christ, in testing the truth or falsehood of every doctrine connected with, or opposed to, the elements of God's plan of salvation. At the same time the strength of the material, brass, may be intended to point out the firmness of the divine purpose in advancing this development; as it is said, Num. xxiii. 19, God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent, (change his mind.) Hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

§ 31. 'And his voice as the sound of many waters.'—So, Jer. x. 13, it is said of the Deity, "When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens." The action of a multitude of waters, or the rushing of many waters, is to overpower, to sweep away every thing before them. The voice of the Son of Man, when he speaks, must be the revelation which he utters, and this revelation we may suppose to have the overwhelming and overpowering effect compared to that of a deluge of many waters. The sound of the waters indicating the effect at hand.

In the book of Daniel we find the description of one whose appearance very nearly corresponds with what the apostle here says of the Son of Man, "Then I lifted up my eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz; his body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude," (Dan. x. 5 and 6.) The effect of the voice of a multitude being that of silencing all other voices.

The similarity of these different visions leads us to conclude that the same divine Spirit which was manifest in the flesh in Christ, has been also in vision exhibited under the various appellations of Gabriel, Michael, and others; but always nearly in the same garb, and bearing the same attributes.

§ 32. 'And he had in his right hand seven stars.'—These stars are explained in the twentieth verse to be the angels of the seven churches—not the churches themselves, but their angels, messengers, or ministering spirits. As we speak of the spirit of a doctrine, these stars or angels may be figures of the spirit, or tendency of the collections of doctrines, represented by these churches or collections of human beings—like stars imparting or exhibiting their light, or the light given them, or as messengers (angels) communicating this light to others; or they may be the systems of faith built upon these doctrines. It does not appear that the seven candlesticks have any other light than that supposed to be committed to them under the figure of a star. Each has its portion of divine light, and each is upheld by the right hand of the Son of Man. We find, by Is. xl. 1, 10, the *right hand* of Jehovah to be his *righteousness*. Accordingly, whatever be represented by these *stars*, we may suppose it to rest or depend for its manifestation upon

the doctrine of salvation by the imputed righteousness of God. The angel, or star, however, is not the light itself, but is something between the candlestick and the light. It is something capable of receiving and transmitting the true light, but something, as we shall see, by which the true light may be misrepresented.

Analogous to this is a literal church or congregation of disciples ; it receives the light, and may be the instrument of imparting it intellectually, but it may also be the instrument of perverting it. As it is said, Matt. v. 14–16, Ye are the light of the world : a city that is set upon a hill cannot be hid : neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men. Here the literal church is neither the light nor the candlestick, but the *candle* ; supposed, however, to give no useful light unless placed in a candlestick. So, to remove the candlestick would be equivalent to depriving the candle of its ability to enlighten those around it ; corresponding with which, we may suppose the *star* to be no longer held in the right hand of him who is in the midst of the golden candlesticks.

§ 33. ‘ And out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword.’—The word of God is said (Heb. iv. 12) to be sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, (ψυχῆς τε καὶ πνεύματος,) separating the physical or natural from the spiritual sense. This word of God is also spoken of, Eph. vi. 17, as the sword of the Spirit ; the instrument by which a spiritual understanding of revelation is obtained. So the promise given to the apostles was, that the Holy Spirit should give them understanding ; the Spirit of truth should guide them into all truth, John xvi. 7, 13. This promise we find fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, when this Spirit of truth appeared unto the disciples as *cloven tongues* (Acts ii. 3) of fire. Not two tongues paired—but one tongue divided into two parts, (διαμεριζόμεναι γλῶσσαι,) figurative apparently of the literal and spiritual senses in which the language of revelation may be understood. These tongues, too, were of *fire*, because the revealed word, with its literal and spiritual sense, is the element for testing the character of every doctrine, or principle of doctrine. Connecting this twofold characteristic of the tongue with the description of the two-edged sword, and its position, coming out of the mouth, we may suppose the two instruments to be the same revealed word, spiritually understood, which is also termed, 2 Thess. ii. 8, *the spirit of the mouth of the Lord*.\*

\* The idea of a twofold sense in the language of inspiration, is far from being a modern one. The efforts of the public teachers amongst the Jews to ascertain the hidden, or mystic sense of the Holy Scriptures, obtained for them, it is said, the appellation of *searchers* ; and teaching in the synagogues was commonly called *searching*, (Cruden’s Concord., art. Synagogue.) Such probably was the searching of the Bereans, (Acts xvii. 11,) and to such searching our Lord may have alluded in his direction to the scribes and Pharisees, (John v. 39.)

§ 34. ‘And his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.’—The day cometh, says the prophet, Malachi iv. 1, 2, when the Sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in his wings. This Sun of righteousness is here revealed in the person of the one like unto the Son of Man. As the natural sun clothes every object accessible to its rays with light, so every object of divine mercy is clothed with the imputed righteousness of the Redeemer. Thus clothed, the disciple appears clad in the light of the countenance of his divine Master, to which allusion is made, Ps. iv. 6, and xlii. 5. So, Ps. lxxxiv. 11, The Lord God is a sun and shield; and lxxxix. 15, “Blessed is the people that know the (gospel’s) joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, *in the light of thy countenance*; in thy name shall they rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.” Or, as it is expressed, Acts ii. 28, Thou hast made known to me the ways of life, thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

We thus perceive in this description of one like unto the Son of Man, the attributes of the Triune God. The one being the express image of the other; thus preparing our minds for a full exhibition of their identity.

“I saw,” says the prophet, (Dan. vii. 13, 14,) “in the night visions, and behold, one like the *Son of man* came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, and nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom, that which shall not be destroyed.” To this we must add the declaration of the apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 27, 28, “For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith he hath put all things under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.\*”

The one like unto the Son of Man being virtually brought near unto the Ancient of days—one identified with the other—God manifest in the flesh—being no other than Jehovah, our righteousness, and the Lord our Redeemer; corresponding with the declaration, Is. xliii. 11, I am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour.

Vs. 17, 18. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not, I am the first and the last: (I am) he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Καὶ ὅτε εἶδον αὐτόν, ἔπεσα πρὸς τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ ὡς νεκρός· καὶ ἔθηκε τὴν δεξιὰν αὐτοῦ ἐπ’ ἐμέ, λέγων· μὴ φοβοῦ· ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος καὶ ὁ ζῶν· καὶ ἔγχε-  
ρόμην νεκρός, καὶ ἰδοὺ ζῶν εἰμι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶ-  
νας τῶν αἰώνων, καὶ ἔχω τὰς κλεῖς τοῦ θανά-  
του καὶ τοῦ ᾗδου.

\* It is evident that, in this, and in all similar passages of Scripture, the *manifestation of the fact*, and not the fact itself, is that which is spoken of as *prospective*.



§ 35. ‘Thou canst not see my face and live,’ said the Lord to Moses, Ex. xxxiii. 20, ‘for there shall no man see me and live.’ The most favoured servants of God appear to have borne this declaration in mind upon every manifestation of the Deity. It was to them, however desirable the favour, a cause of trembling. “Wo is me,” said the prophet, (Is. vi. 5,) “for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.” Such seems to have been the apprehension of the apostle on this occasion. He does not appear to have recognized, in the form before him, the face of his beloved Master. His impressions seem to have been only those of that awe which a supposed sight of the Supreme Being must have inspired.

Daniel experienced similar feelings of fear in beholding the vision already alluded to, so like the present, (Dan. x. 5–18.) He needed one like the appearance of a man, to strengthen him, to enable him to contemplate the face of him whose appearance was as of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire. So it is *in Christ* only, as in the *cleft of the rock*, (Ex. xxxiii. 22,) that we can behold the glory of the Lord and live. As, without *holiness* no man can see the Lord, so it is *in Christ* only that any can be thus qualified to see him, or to enjoy his presence.

‘And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not.’—This right hand is the same as that holding or sustaining the seven stars. The right hand of the Lord is particularly designated in Scripture as the *hand of power*, Mark xiv. 62, and Luke xxii. 69, especially of saving power, (Ps. cxxxviii. 7,) and the reason why it is thus designated is given, Is. xli. 10. Because it represents that divine righteousness by the imputation of which the sinner is justified and saved. As it is said, “Fear not, for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the *right hand of my righteousness*.” To be upheld by the power of Jehovah’s righteousness, being thus equivalent to being *in Christ*, or in that position of holiness which enables the disciple to see the Lord and live, and which virtually says to him, *Fear not*.

§ 36. ‘I am the first, and the last, and the living’—and *I became dead, and behold, I am living for ever*.—The terms *first* and *last*, corresponding with *Alpha* and *Omega*, have been already commented upon (§ 22) as applicable especially to the beginning and ending of the economy of redemption. The living, that is the ever-living, as John vi. 57, ὁ ζῶν πατήρ, the living or ever-living Father. And was dead or became dead; the living became dead, and yet behold he liveth, and that for ever. Here is a declaration identifying expressly the speaker with the crucified Redeemer, “who died for our sins, and was raised for our justification;” at the same time identifying him with the speaker in the eighth verse, who declares himself to be the Alpha and the Omega—equivalent to the first and the last—also *the being*, and *the was*, and *the coming*—the Almighty. We have thus

advanced, by a very important step, in the development or unveiling of Jesus Christ, showing him, although in appearance to human vision like unto the Son of Man, to be in effect one and the same with the Almighty God, the Everlasting Father, as it was predicted of him, Is. ix. 6.

The living, the Ever-living, became dead, and still he is alive for ever.—Well might it be said of him, in the same prediction, his name shall be called *Wonderful*. Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness—God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory, (1 Tim. iii. 16.) The Ever-living, in the person of his Son, having assumed a human form, uniting a material body with his own spirit, underwent a separation of that spirit from the body, became dead, as all who die undergo a like separation; but again, by his own power, reunited that spirit with the same body, and remains as he was, the Ever-living. As he said, in reference to his human form, (John ii. 19,) “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up;” and as he said of the sacrifice of what may be called his natural life, John x. 18, “No man” (*οὐδείς*, no one) “taketh it from me—I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” He did lay it down, he yielded up, or rather sent forth, transmitted, breathed out, (as it is variously expressed by his evangelists,) the spirit; but we must bear in mind that this spirit did not cease *to be*, and that what we call death itself, is not annihilation. Jesus died, or became dead, and rose again, or became alive again, the third day, but he was not annihilated a single moment—there was no cessation of being. His spirit, separated from the body, had still the power of reuniting itself to the body. The body without the spirit is said, indeed, to be dead, (James ii. 26,) but it is nowhere said that the spirit without the body is dead.

§ 37. ‘And have the keys of death and of hell.’—There is a difference here, it will be perceived, in the order of these terms, some editions with our common version, reading, the keys of hell and of death; giving the precedence to the term *death*, however, is most in conformity with the arrangement of the same words in other parts of the Apocalypse, as well as with our general notions of the subject.

‘And have the *keys*.’—As keys are instruments, in a literal sense, of locking and unlocking, of confining and of liberating, so used as the expression is here, in a book of revelation, we suppose them to represent the means of unlocking or opening the things to be revealed. Christ may be said to have the keys of Death and Hell in every sense—literally, as God, subjecting the creature to natural death and its consequences—as Supreme Judge placing the sinner in a position of condemnation, and pronouncing the sentence of condemnation; and as Redeemer, delivering even the criminal from the state to which under the law he has been condemned. But

especially, in this last respect, he not only has the keys, he is himself the instrument of the deliverance. We may presume, therefore, that in the apocalyptic sense, the use of a *key* is its employment in developing the mysteries spoken of; as, in his first coming, Jesus Christ furnished a key to the interpretation of the ancient prophecies, so, in the final manifestation of his true character and offices, he furnishes the means of understanding the mysteries of Death and Hell. As it is said, 1 Cor. ii. 7, 10, "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery; even the hidden wisdom ordained of God before the world;" "but now," he adds, "revealed or unveiled unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." "Which things, also," he says, "we speak, *not* in the words which *man's* wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth"—comparing spiritual things with spiritual. The whole Economy of Redemption constitutes, it is true, one mystery; but this mystery is composed of a number of other mysteries subordinate to it; as the mystery of the resurrection, 1 Cor. xv. 57; the mystery represented by the marriage union, Eph. v. 32; the mystery of iniquity, 2 Thess. ii. 7; the mystery of the seven stars, Rev. i. 20; the mystery of Babylon, Rev. xvii. 5, 7. All of which may be included with others in the mysteries of the kingdom alluded to, Matt. xiii. 11, and Luke viii. 10; and the mysteries of God, of which the Corinthians were said to be *stewards*. (1 Cor. iv. 1.) So we suppose Death and Hell to have each its separate mystery, of which Christ alone has, and furnishes the *key* or means of interpretation, as he possesses and furnishes also the keys of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, (Matt. xvi. 19.)

§ 38. 'Death and Hell.'—Whatever is to be understood in the apocalypse by these terms, we find by Rev. xx. 14, that they represent something finally said to be cast into the *lake of fire*, which is sufficient to establish the point, that they represent mysteries, for the development of which a key may appropriately be said to be required. We find, by Rom. vii. 9, that there is a state of death contemplated in Scripture entirely distinct from that of death in the ordinary, or physical sense of the term. I was alive, says the apostle, without the law; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. Here death is an appellation given very specifically to a *position* under the law, which peculiar position we may term the mystery of Death.

The term Hell, would have been better rendered in this place by adopting the Greek word *Hades*, to distinguish it from the term *γέεννα*. (Gehenna,) which we have likewise translated by the same English word *Hell*, although the two Greek terms have probably very different significations. The last of these terms, sometimes denominated the Hell of fire, *τὴν γέενναν τοῦ πυρός*, (Matt. v. 22. xviii. 9. and Mark ix. 47.) is not found at all in the book of Revelation; not, we may suppose, because there is no such thing, but because



it is not a subject of which this book is designed to treat. The term *Hades*, on the contrary, is met with in three other passages of Revelations, and in them it is immediately coupled with, and succeeds the term or idea of Death: as in the representation of the rider of the *pale* horse, it is said, *Hades* followed with him; and in the judgment scene, Rev. xx. 13, *Death and Hell*, or *Hades*, are said to deliver up the dead which were in them—indicating very plainly that this term *Hades*, must be the appellation of something else than the state of future punishment, because we cannot suppose its inmates to be punished first, and judged afterwards. The same word, too, is employed 1 Cor. xv. 55, where we have rendered it the *grave*; and perhaps we may say that as, in a material sense, the state of the grave is an immediate consequence of the state of Death, so, in a spiritual sense, the state of condemnation is an immediate consequence of a position under the law. The presence of the law giving existence to sin, (the sting of death,) and the existence of sin being necessarily attended by a state of condemnation, in which sense *Death* and *Hades* may be said to be inseparable companions.

These suggestions are sufficient to show that *Hades*, the apocalyptic Hell, has its mystery, as well as Death; or that death and hell constitute one mystery; and, consequently, that to have the *keys of death and hell*, is to have the means of opening, unlocking, or developing the mysteries thus denominated. Our further consideration of these topics must necessarily be postponed for the present.

Vs. 19. 20. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

Γράψον οὖν ἃ εἶδες καὶ ἃ εἰσὶ καὶ ἃ μέλλου  
γίνεσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα· τὸ μυστήριον τῶν  
ἐπὶ ἀστέρων, ὧν εἶδες ἐπὶ τῆς δεξιᾶς μου,  
καὶ τὰς ἐπὶ ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησιῶν· καὶ τὰς ἐπὶ  
ἀστέρος· ἄγγελοι τῶν ἐπὶ ἐκκλησιῶν εἰσὶ.  
καὶ αἱ ἐκκλησίαι αἱ ἐπὶ ἐκκλησιῶν εἰσὶ.

§ 39. 'Write, therefore.'—The word *therefore* is not in the common version, but the particle *οὖν* is said to be found in all the Greek editions supposed to be most correct; and it appears to give an appropriate force to the direction. As if the divine speaker had said, I, the first and the last, and the ever-living—I am the author and finisher of all that you here see, or are to see—I have the keys for opening all these *mysteries*: write *therefore* what thou seest; write what thou hast already seen in this vision, what thou now seest, and what is yet to be exhibited to thee.

The apostle is directed to commit the *vision* to writing; not the interpretation of it. The word *things* is supplied in our common version, but it is not material, the term being as applicable to objects of vision as to realities. We are to be careful, however, not to associate *literal* ideas with terms intended only to be figurative. The word *hereafter*, is also rather a free

translation of the Greek *μετὰ ταῦτα*, *after these*. Write the things thou hast seen, the things thou now seest, and the things which are to be *after these*. The same Greek words *μετὰ ταῦτα* repeatedly occur in other parts of this book, and are as repeatedly rendered by *after this*, or *after these things*. In Rev. iv. 1, they are translated at the commencement of the verse by *after this*, and at the close by *hereafter*. The importance of the difference lies principally in the different ideas associated. *After this*, we readily suppose to apply to something subsequently taking place in the vision; while, by things *to be hereafter*, we suppose events are understood which are to take place ages, or centuries afterwards. There is nothing, however, in the direction here given, to oblige us to suppose the apostle instructed to write an account of distant events, either political or ecclesiastical. He is only to write what he sees, has seen, and may see.

Taking into consideration the peculiarly strange and anomalous appearance of the objects presented for John's contemplation, we may well suppose that he would hardly have committed a description of them to writing, had he not been imperatively directed to do so. He might well have doubted the saneness of his own mind. He might have hesitated, lest he should be carried away by some delusion of the imagination; and this, not so much in respect to what he already saw, or had seen, as in regard to what he was yet to see. The command is therefore positive, and general, and unqualified. He is to write *all*. As if it had been said to him, however strange and unnatural these things, or some of them, may appear to you, write down all that you see and hear. The manner in which the speaker had previously announced himself, leaving no room to doubt of his authority, or of his peculiar prerogative in dictating the duty to be performed.

§ 40. 'The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand.'—The word mystery, *μυστήριον*, is said to come from the Hebrew *mustar*, a moral truth veiled under an external representation, (Jones's Lex. 1132.) This definition is nearly the same as that usually given to the term *allegory*; and perhaps the *mustar* of the Hebrews corresponded with the allegory of the Greeks. The word *mystery*, however, was in common use amongst the Greeks in the times of the apostles, as a mythological term applicable to something hidden or concealed in matters of religion—hidden in effect although outwardly exhibited by mystic rites, signs, or symbols.

The apostle is first directed to write certain things, and then is added apparently in apposition, *the mystery of the seven stars*; as if the first direction were equivalent to the second, write what thou seest; that is, write the mystery of the seven stars upon my right hand. The whole subsequent revelation constituting, or pertaining to, this mystery of the seven stars.

He is also to write the seven golden candlesticks, or an account of them, as something connected with the mystery, although it is not expressed that

the mystery of the stars is also that of the candlesticks ; for the stars are spoken of in the genitive case, as governed by *mystery*, while the candlesticks are in the accusative, forming with the mystery a common object of the verb *write*. The near relationship, however, of the candlestick to the star or candle, may leave it to be implied, that what is the mystery of one must be the mystery of the other.

The further explanation is then given :—

‘ The seven stars are angels of the seven churches, and the seven candlesticks are the seven churches.’—These terms are all terms of vision. The star is not literally a star, nor the angel literally an angel, nor the candlestick literally a candlestick, nor the church literally a church. The star represents an angel, and the angel represents something of a spiritual character. The candlestick represents a church, and the church represents something also of a spiritual character.

We suppose churches, as assemblages (*ἐκκλησίαι*) literally of human beings, to represent assemblages of doctrinal principles or truths ; and as these churches of Asia are represented by golden candlesticks, we suppose the material of the principles of these assemblages to be *truth*, that is, they are systems of true principles. The Greek term *ἐκκλησία* (church,) expresses not merely an assembly of persons, but an assembly of persons called out—an assembly of select persons, of particular stations or characters. So, spiritually, the seven assemblages of principles, or elements of doctrine, are select assemblages, true principles, or elements called out from the mass. So many collections of these principles, constituting parts of the whole collection of truths, enter into the composition of the church or economy of grace ; this economy, as a whole, may perhaps be typified by the candlestick of pure gold, seen by the prophet Zech. iv. 2. The seven churches of Asia, literally, we suppose to be mere types—having answered the purpose for which they were intended, as literal assemblages of Christians they have passed into oblivion ; it is not even necessary to enquire into their character, or that of the individuals composing them ; but there is an important distinction here, between the church and the angel of the church.

The subsequent admonitions, it will be perceived, are directed to the *angels* of the churches ; and in the reprimand given to the angel of the church of Ephesus, he is told that his candlestick—his *golden* candlestick—his church shall be taken out of the way. By this, it appears that the angel of the church is something liable to perversion, and to be deprived of the advantage derived from its collection of truths ; but these collections themselves are unchangeable—they may be removed, but not destroyed.

Angels, as Paul says or implies, are all ministering spirits ; admitting these *churches* or *candlesticks* to represent assemblages of true doctrinal



principles, we suppose the angels to represent the system of faith deduced from those principles. The principles may be true, but the system built upon or deduced from them may be more or less incorrect—as we say of an argument, the premises are good, but the deduction is false. The *systems* represented by these angels may, accordingly, prove to be perversions of true doctrines. In this case they will eventually be manifested, as unsustained by the assemblages of truths, from which they professed to emanate. Such a manifestation would be in effect the taking away or removing of their golden candlestick, and would be equivalent to a repudiation of the angel.\*

\* This last verse appears to have been designed as an explanatory introduction to the several addresses contained in the two following chapters. The division of the chapters, however, here as well as elsewhere, seems to be unnecessary and injudicious as far as the meaning is concerned. We are not to suppose any considerable pause between the conclusion of this chapter, and the commencement of the next. The apostle is first told generally all that he is to write; and then, as it were, in the same breath, he is told what to write to the churches severally; while, in the meantime, to prepare him to understand the direction given to write the *seven angels*, he is shown the connection between these angels and the stars, and between the churches and the candlesticks—at the same time, we are to recollect that the whole Apocalypse, as one epistle, purports to be written for the use of the seven churches. Each is to receive its introductory address, while also each receives a copy of the whole revelation.

The *angels* of the seven churches find, we may suppose, in the pictures of the Apocalypse, an admonition against the tendency of their own errors, and an exhibition of truth to preserve them from going further out of the way.

The *seven churches*, in the aggregate, represent *literally* the whole Christian community, all to whom the Gospel is preached—to whom these presents may come—spiritually, the seven in the aggregate represent the whole economy of salvation, or spiritual church, represented by the Bride, as we shall see hereafter. So also we may suppose, the seven angels, with the good and bad features peculiar to them, to represent in the aggregate, *literally*, the whole visible church, with its various errors as well as truths; spiritually, the Economy of grace, perverted more or less by the erroneous elements which have crept into the exhibition of it—equivalent, perhaps, to that typified by Babylon.

## CHAPTER II.

*Epistle to the Angel of the Church of Ephesus.*

V. 1. Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write: these things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.

Τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἐκκλησίας γράψον· τάδε λέγει ὁ κρατῶν τοὺς ἐπὶ τὰ ἀστέρας ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ αὐτοῦ, ὁ περιπατῶν ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ἑπτὰ λυχνιῶν τῶν χρυσῶν·

§ 41. ‘Unto the angel of the church,’ &c.—As these terms have been already commented upon, and the epistles are distinctly addressed to the angels of the churches, and not to the churches themselves, we shall presume these angels (§ 32) to represent something equivalent to *systems* of faith—*deductions* from assemblages of doctrinal truth. The churches themselves representing something equivalent to such collections of truth, or elements of true doctrine; as the candlesticks are said to be the churches, (Rev. i. 20;) and their material, gold, is the symbol of truth, (§ 27.) The Greek term *ecclesia*, rendered church, signifying also, not only an assembly, but an assembly of selected individuals—not a promiscuous multitude, but a selection from the multitude. If there be error, therefore, to be reproved, it is not in the assemblage of doctrinal principles or truths, (the candlestick,) but in the system or spirit of the system, the star, angel or ministering spirit, messenger, or instrument of communicating or imparting the views formed from these collections of truths.

‘He that holdeth,’ &c.—The verb *κρατέω*, to hold or wield, expresses a right of power over the thing held. A right implied, though not expressed in the verb *ἔχω*, to have, employed Rev. i. 16, where the Son of Man appears as having (*ἔχων*) only these stars in his right hand: here he declares himself to have a right or power over them—a declaration the more appropriate as he is now about to admonish and reprove, as well as to instruct and encourage.

‘The seven stars.’—These stars are the seven angels, (Rev. i. 20;) that is, they represent them, as a thing in the hand may represent something at a distance; for a person could not be spoken of as sending a message in writing to another whom he held by the hand. So the *holding*, (*κρατέω*), cannot express here the immediate exercise of power; because, if the stars were immediately controlled by the hand, it would not be necessary to send the epistle to them. The power, we may say, is exercised through the instrumentality of the instructions given.

‘In his right hand.’—The right hand of his righteousness, (Is. xli. 10.) As the star is upheld by the hand alluded to, so the system, if a system of truth, must be upheld by divine righteousness as its basis. And as the right of the Creator to control the universe arises from the fact that he sustains the universe, so the right of the Redeemer to control or dictate a system of faith, arises from the fact that such a system must depend upon his own imputed righteousness for its foundation. In other words, as the right hand of Jehovah’s righteousness is declared, in the passage above quoted, to be the instrument of salvation; so the same right hand, or the precious truth represented by it, must control and regulate all views pertaining to the scheme of redemption.

‘Who walketh,’ &c.—This walking amidst the golden candlesticks, *ecclesiæ*, or assemblages of select truths, may indicate that amidst these only Christ is to be found, bearing the characteristics represented in the description given of him in the preceding chapter.

Vs. 2, 3. I know thy works and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear (them which are) evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

οἶδα τὰ ἔργα σου καὶ τὸν κόπον σου καὶ τὴν ὑπομονήν σου, καὶ ὅτι οὐ δύνῃ βαστάσαι κακούς, καὶ ἐπέρασας τοὺς λέγοντας ἑαυτοὺς ἀποστόλους καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶ, καὶ εἶδες αὐτοὺς ψευδεῖς, καὶ ὑπομονήν ἔχεις, καὶ ἐβάστασας διὰ τὸ ὄνομά μου, καὶ οὐ κεκοπίωκας.

§ 42. There are some slight differences here in the various Greek editions, as well as in the English versions, but such as to require no comment. The rendering of the close of the last verse, may be, according to Leusden, “and has *suffered* for my name, and hast not been wanting or deficient.” The words, *them which are*, in the second verse, are supplied by our translators; the reading without them would be better—and *how thou canst not bear evil ones*, that is, evil principles; but this is immaterial, as we consider here, as well as throughout the whole book of Revelation, the terms of persons when introduced, as well as of animals, angels, and material things, to be figuratively employed. Principles being personified by men and angels, or typically represented by beasts, birds, living creatures, and even inanimate objects.

‘I know thy works,’ &c.—A doctrinal system is here addressed under the figure of the angel, or ministering spirit, of a church. Its tendency to activity and perseverance in promoting the glory of the Redeemer is praised; at the same time, its deficiency in one important respect is pointed out; while due credit is given for its opposition to certain incorrect views of Christian faith, and its examination and condemnation of false doctrines, spoken of as pretended apostles.

We have no particulars of the Ephesian Church to throw light upon this passage, unless it be the faith and love towards the saints,



alluded to, Ephesians i. 15. The quality praised or reprehended, and not the person or persons, is that to which our attention is to be directed. It is unnecessary to inquire what particular works or labour are here alluded to—we have only to take the representation as it is in the general. The Ephesian angel was not deficient, apparently, in *works*, but he may have relied too much upon works for salvation, as contradistinguished from grace. He laboured, too, but he may have laboured or gone about to establish his own righteousness; he exercised patience, but he may have relied upon his patience as a work; he had zeal, too, in contending with the elements of error, and, according to Paul, as above referred to, he had faith towards God, and love or benevolence towards the saints, but he may have considered his faith a merit, and his benevolence a merit; and thus, after all, have contemplated salvation as a result of works of righteousness done by the disciple, although not works professedly fulfilling the law. That such was the case, appears probable from the character of the error for which he is admonished.

V. 4. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast forsaken thy first love. Ἀλλ' ἔχω κατὰ σοῦ, ὅτι τὴν ἀγάπην σου τὴν πρώτην ἀφῆκας.

§ 43. 'Because thou hast forsaken,' &c.—The word ἀγάπην, here translated love, is the same as that rendered, 1 Cor. xiii., *charity*. We may either say here, thou hast forsaken thy first *charity*, or we may say there, *without love we are nothing*. It is to be regretted that the same English term has not been uniformly employed in our common version. So, Romans xiii. 10. *love* is said to be the fulfilling of the law, while, according to Tim. i. 5., the end of the commandment is *charity*. The term in both cases being the same as that which is expressed, Rev. ii. 4, by love, and ii. 19, by charity. The manner in which the verb, derived from the same root, is employed. 1 John iv. 19, shows us more exactly what we are to understand from the Scripture use of it—ἡμεῖς ἀγαπῶμεν αὐτὸν ὅτι αὐτὸς πρῶτος ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς—"We love him, because he first loved us;" from which it is evident, that this principle of love on the part of the disciple is that commonly called *gratitude*; although it appears somewhat extraordinary that the term grateful, or gratitude, is nowhere to be found in our common version of the Scriptures; and even the term *thankfulness* occurs but once, Acts xxiv. 3, and then it is only used as a complimentary expression towards a Roman governor. The term *thankful*, occurs but once in the Old Testament, Ps. c. 4, and once in the New, Col. iii. 15, and once, Rom. i. 21, where the want of thankfulness, or of gratitude, is spoken of as a characteristic of those who, although they knew God, glorified him not as God. That the same principle of gratitude, spoken of by John as love towards God, is also recognized by David, appears from his language, Ps. cxvi. 1, "I love the Lord *because* he hath heard my voice and my supplications."

We are to be grateful to God, as the Scriptures teach us, for the love, or loving kindness exhibited by him towards us. This is the disciple's love or charity manifested towards God, in obedience ; towards man, in benevolence. The love of God consists in his free and unmerited goodness towards us ; our love to him is something which He has deserved, merited, in the highest possible degree. His love towards us, is something entirely undeserved on our part ; our love towards him, is in return for favours received from him. The great love wherewith God has loved us, (Eph. ii. 4,) is entirely a matter of *grace*, a free gift ; our love to him, is something which we are under the highest obligations to render—something not to be withheld by us, without the basest ingratitude. His love towards us is something which He is under no obligation to give, and which He may at any time withhold without any act of injustice.

Although the term *love* may be the same in both cases, it is evident from the difference of the circumstances that the cause of the sentiment must equally differ. To pretend that our love of God should be like his towards us, entirely irrespective of any antecedent cause, is to place ourselves in the position of the Deity, a degree of presumptuousness virtually bordering upon blasphemy. It is at the same time undermining that foundation upon which our obligation of service is to rest, and from which our love is to grow up and increase with every retrospective glance of favours received, throughout eternity. The greater the love or benevolence we believe God to have manifested towards us, the greater, necessarily, must be our return of gratitude, or love to him. Could the love of God towards us have been merited on our part, in the first instance, there would have been no room for gratitude ; or could it have been partially so, our gratitude in the same proportion must be partial, if such a thing were possible. If we believe what God has done for us to be but an act of *justice* towards us—nothing but what we have merited, as a reward of some goodness of our own—our belief will not admit of the principle of gratitude. *With foolish hearts so darkened, we must necessarily be unthankful.* So, if we believe ourselves to have partially merited what we receive at his hands, in the same proportion we lose that love which is due to him for all his favours, but especially for his redeeming mercy.

Such we suppose to have been the error pervading the Ephesian system—a persuasion that the benefit of eternal salvation is the result of some good quality or meritorious work on the part of the recipient—a persuasion calculated to destroy in the disciple that sentiment of love or gratitude so unavoidably felt in the first moments of conversion. It may have been, therefore, especially in view of the ungrateful tendency of these errors, that the Apostle prayed, as he says, for the Ephesians, “ That they, being rooted and grounded in *love*, might be enabled to comprehend the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ,” Eph. iii. 17,

that by this knowledge they might themselves be brought back to what is called in the Apocalypse their *first love*.

Our views may be perhaps better illustrated here, by supposing the case of an individual.

The heart or mind of the sinner on his first conversion, when first convicted of his sinfulness, overflows with gratitude towards his Saviour for that love of God which he believes and trusts is manifested in his redemption. He does not then admit a thought of any merit of his own. The involuntary expression of his feelings corresponds with that of the Psalmist, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits," (Ps. cxvi. 12.) The more sensible he is of his entire unworthiness of the least of the favours of his God and Saviour, the more grateful will he be for the distinguished privilege he enjoys. This state of mind may be denominated that of the disciple's *first love*. Conversion, however, being followed by reformation in mind and conduct, attention to religious and moral duties takes place perhaps of reckless self-gratification, and habits of thoughtlessness being now changed for those of piety and devotion, the same individual begins to look upon himself with some degree of self-complacency. He compares his conduct with that of those around him, not so correct in their deportment, and he gradually imbibes the idea that there is some good thing in him. That the favour he receives from God is a reward or recompense of something that he has done. Some work of his own, or, as he supposes, his own penitential feelings, may have been a merit calling for this reward. He no longer considers his eternal salvation entirely a matter of grace, and consequently he no longer possesses those unmingled feelings of gratitude with which his heart once overflowed. He loses his first love.

V. 5. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

Μνημόνευε ὅν ποθεν πέπτωκας, καὶ μετανοήσον καὶ τὰ πρῶτα ἔργα ποιήσον· εἰ δὲ μή, ἔρχομαι σοι ταχὺ καὶ κινήσω τὴν λυχνίαν σου ἐκ τοῦ τόπου αὐτῆς, ἐὰν μὴ μετανοήσῃς.

§ 44. The word translated *repent*, is the imperative of the verb *μετανοέω*, compounded of *μετὰ*, change, or after, and *νοέω*, I think. The compound expressing a change of mind, or after-thought, in Latin *sententiam et mentem muto—post intelligo*. In the Latin versions of Leusden and Beza, it is expressed by *resipisco*, to come to one's senses again. It signifies, strictly, a mental or intellectual operation, a change of opinions, a change typically represented by that described as taking place in the mind of the prodigal son, when, as it is said of him, Luke xv. 17, *he came to himself*; so also by the change wrought on the demoniac, (Luke viii. 35,) when after his cure he sat clothed, and *in his right mind*. Such was the meaning of the word in the times of our Saviour and his apostles, although in subsequent ages of



the church different ideas came to be associated with the term. Some of our lexicographers give two meanings to this and other Greek Scripture terms, one according to profane writers, and the other according to ecclesiastical writers; but we may reasonably suppose the evangelists and apostles to have written the New Testament in Greek, for the perusal and understanding of those who were familiar with that language, as it was spoken and written in their time; of course we must go to the *profane* writers of that day to know what was understood by the words then used; for we cannot suppose the apostles to have looked forward prophetically to the meaning to be given to certain words by the schoolmen or ecclesiastical writers, some hundred years afterwards.\*

‘Remember, therefore, whence thou art fallen.’—Change thy mind, come to thy senses again. Go back to those views of faith which were given thee when thou wast first convinced of sin, and first cast thyself upon the atonement of Christ for salvation—when, most sensible of thy utter unworthiness, the whole work of thy redemption appeared to thee a work of sovereign grace, and a call for unadulterated love, or gratitude, towards him who gave himself for thee.

Such appears to be the admonition addressed to this personification of a system of faith, possessed of many good features, but labouring under the influence of an error peculiarly hostile to the system of the gospel. Under the figure of this angel all are admonished who are under the influence of the same error. Wherever the *first love* is forsaken, there the golden candlestick will be taken away.

‘Or else I will come unto thee quickly,’ that is, suddenly, (§ 4.)—I will manifest myself as the only Saviour, and show the inconsistency of thy system with the assemblage of true principles, represented by the *golden candlestick*.

\* *Μετάνοια*, says Suicerus, *apud scriptore profanos, notat mutatam mentem et sententiam; apud scriptores vero ecclesiasticos, notat, 1, penitentiam sive resipiscentiam. 2, Pœnas canonicas eorum qui ob delicta sua castigabantur, atque hi dicebantur οἱ ἐν μετάνοιᾳ*. Repentance, according to profane writers, signifies a change of mind, or opinion. But according to ecclesiastical writers, it denotes—1st, penitence, or coming to one’s right mind—2d, the canonical punishments, or penalties of those who were chastened on account of their misdeeds—or, as he says of the verb *μετανοῶ*, *specialiter μετανοῦντες vocantur, qui ob delicta sua in ecclesiæ pœnis ecclesiasticis castigabantur*. Those were especially styled repenting persons, who were being chastened, on account of their offences against the church, with ecclesiastical penalties.

The design of this chastisement was, no doubt, to bring these delinquents to a *change of mind*—but in process of time, in the use of terms, the means were substituted for the end, and the endurance of penalty was put for repentance; and subsequently penance and repentance were considered identic. It is evident that the apostles, in their use of language, did not contemplate these interpretations of a subsequent age.

As the right arm sustains the stars, so the golden candlestick, or assemblage of truths, may sustain the system of doctrine. To remove the candlestick, being equivalent to withdrawing the right arm from the star; that is, unless there is in the system supposed, a return to what is denominated its first love, it will be manifested to be deprived of the support of divine righteousness spoken of as the *right arm* of the Saviour.

‘Repent and do thy first works.’—That is, works of faith, operations of the mind, such as are spoken of by Christ himself, (John vi. 28 and 29,) “They said, therefore, unto him, what shall we do that we may *work the works* of God? Jesus answered, and said unto them, this is the *work* of God: that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” Such, probably, were the first works—a conviction of sin and of entire unworthiness, and the casting of one’s self without reserve on the grace of salvation through a crucified Saviour. Change thy mind, and go back to thy first views—going back to these first views, being the course to be pursued for regaining the lively sentiment of gratitude designated as a *first love*.

V. 6. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. Ἀλλὰ τοῦτο ἔχεις, ὅτι μισεῖς τὰ ἔργα τῶν Νικολαϊτῶν, ἃ καὶ γὰρ μισῶ.

§ 45. The term Nicolaitans comes from Nicolas, Νικό-λαος, one that overcomes the people; or from νικολαίται, *victoriæ plebis*, (Leusden and others.) The people being overcome, we suppose, by arts of seduction, as in the course recommended by Balaam, and as by the idolatrous worship introduced by Jezebel. The term has been supposed to be applicable to the followers of a certain teacher of the name of *Nicolas*; “but a better opinion,” it is said, “seems to be, that the appellation here is not a proper name, but symbolical and referring to the persons described, Rev. ii. 14, as holding the Balaam doctrine,” (Rob. Lex. 472.) We should go a little further, and say that in the apocalyptic sense it applies to principles inculcating this doctrine, or something analogous to them.

The word translated deeds, (ἔργα,) is the same as that rendered in the previous verse by *works*—deeds or works here being matters of faith. The *deeds* of the Nicolaitans, we suppose to be certain errors of doctrine opposed to the truth as it is in Jesus. Not professedly in opposition, but, like other heresies, although nominally Christian, militating with a correct view of the gospel system—teaching a dependence upon other means of salvation than those of the merits of Christ. Such, for example, as the doctrines of those who trouble the disciples with words subverting their souls, (minds,\*) saying,

\* τὰ ψυχὰς, here, as in Acts xiv. 22, “confirming the *souls*,” &c., would be better rendered by *minds*, instead of souls—a subversion of the soul, according to the usual acceptation of the term, implying a loss of eternal life, an irremediable evil; while a subversion of the mind, carries with it only the idea of a lapse into error, capable of being subsequently remedied by an increase of knowledge.—(Rob. Lex. 842, art. ψυχή.)

ye must be circumcised and keep the whole law, (Acts xv. 24.) To which subversion the Apostle probably refers, Gal. iii. 1, as a *bewitching*, operating against an obedience to the truth.

Whatever may have been the tendency of the spirit of the Ephesian Church, it did not go so far as to adopt these Nicolaitan errors. It was strongly opposed to them, as the figurative expression, *hating*, implies. At least it was so in the outset, although any divergence from the line of truth must ultimately issue in an entire estrangement from it. As we frequently meet with those who strenuously profess themselves opposed to every principle bearing the semblance of self-righteousness, while their doctrinal views, if carried out, unquestionably prove their hope of eternal life to rest upon some merit of their own, either in faith or practice. Their views thus, in effect, undermining the foundation of gratitude or love towards the Author of their salvation, and in that respect perhaps illustrating the error peculiar to the Ephesian system, (§ 63.)

V. 7. He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις· τῷ νικῶντι, δώσω αὐτῷ φαγεῖν ἐκ τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ.

§ 46. ‘He that hath an ear,’ &c.—This admonitory caution occurs several times in the gospels, as well as in the Apocalypse; apparently conveying an intimation of the peculiarly mystic sense of the passages in which it is found, reminding the reader of some hidden meaning, either in the preceding or subsequent context, or in both.

At the commencement of this book it is repeated seven successive times, that is, at the conclusion of each of these addresses; being thrown in, as it were, by way of parenthesis, perhaps equivalent to saying, He that hath an understanding capable of receiving the spiritual sense, let him so receive it. The advertisement is general and uniform to all the angels—what the Spirit saith to the churches, being the whole subject of the book. The mystic caution applies, therefore, to the whole, and to all who read, and hear, and keep it.

‘To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the tree of life.’—*To the overcoming*, (τῷ νικῶντι.) The pronouns *he* and *him* in these passages are supplied by the translators, (as the word *man* is in some other like passages supplied,) probably from taking *the overcoming* in a literal sense. In the original the masculine prepositive article only is employed, with a present participle. This peculiarity, however, is not material, for if it had been otherwise, we should still consider the *he*, *him*, *man*, &c., personifications, in conformity with the uniform style and tenor of the book;—a book of which the language, to be understood, must be immaterialized throughout—entirely divested of any sense connected with matter, other than that arising



from the analogy between the material figure, and the spiritual subject of thought represented by it.

§ 47. *The tree of life* is not a material tree. The eating of this tree, or of the fruit of it, is not an eating in a literal sense ; so, the him that eateth is not necessarily a human being, but something, we apprehend, represented by a human being. Eating a portion of matter is a participation of that matter ; so a principle or doctrine may partake of, or participate in, a certain important truth. A disciple's faith is his doctrine. If this doctrine be sound or correct, it will be manifested to participate in the all-important truth of *salvation through the vicarious suffering of a Redeemer*. If the principle of the Christian's faith be such as to manifest its superiority over the legal principles of condemnation, it will be manifested also to partake of the only sufficient principle of justification : the imputed righteousness of Christ, as set forth in the propitiatory offering of his own body on the cross. All that is *prospective*, or all that, in speaking of which the *future tense* is employed in this revelation, being applicable, as we have before remarked, (§ 34,) to the manifestation of the fact, and not to the fact itself.

The word here translated *tree*, is the same as that elsewhere in the Testament rendered *cross*. Its primary meaning is *wood* ; the material by a common figure of speech being put for the thing composed of it. So to partake of a tree, is to partake of that which the tree bears—its fruit. The cross of Christ bore his body, bruised for our iniquities, and wounded for our transgressions ; and from his body on the same cross was poured forth the expiatory offering of his own blood, the fountain opened for the washing away of sin and uncleanness, (Zech. xiii. 1.)

The material body of Christ, we may say, represents the spiritual body of his righteousness or merits. The material blood, his atonement, or propitiation—his taking upon himself the penalty of man's transgressions. The cross may represent something equivalent to the purpose of divine sovereignty, which provided the sacrifice, or that principle of divine justice which required it. Such we suppose to be the *Tree of life* in contemplation, or rather that for which it is put, *Christ crucified*, corresponding with a certain purpose in the divine mind, a principle in the economy of grace, represented by Christ crucified. The disciple in fact participates of the tree of life, by participating in the imputed merits of his Redeemer. Sharing in the justification procured by the interposing righteousness of Christ, and in the ablution from sin, resulting from his atonement. The principle of faith which overcomes the requisitions of the law, participates, in the Apocalyptic sense, of the tree of life, by being *manifested* to belong to that arrangement or purpose of the divine mind, exhibited as *Christ crucified*—as the substitution of the Saviour for the sinner—as the sacrifice of the Redeemer's merits in behalf of the transgressor.

The words *to the overcoming*, (*τῷ νικῶντι*), contain apparently an allusion to the term *νικολαϊζῶν*, just before used. As if it had been said: This thou hast, that thou hatest the doctrine of the *overcomers of the people*, which I also hate: to the really *overcoming* I will give, &c., &c. This play upon words, as we commonly call it, appears to be natural to the chain or current of human thoughts—an idea of importance being frequently suggested to the mind by a sound or term, of which the reasoner had just before made use, in speaking of some other topic. Such a use of language may be said to belong to the rhetoric of nature, the severer discipline of art only having discountenanced it in later times.

Other parts of Scripture teach the duty of faith, and the benefits resulting from it; but we suppose it to be the special object of this revelation to show us what our faith should be, and to illustrate the peculiar principles upon which it is to be formed. It will then be for the disciple to compare his faith with the picture here presented. If it correspond, he possesses that which overcomes, and in proportion as he finds this to be the case, his hopes of salvation are strengthened, and his gratitude for that salvation augmented.

To suppose the disciple himself to overcome, is to make him the efficient author of his own salvation, whereas it is evident that Christ only, speaking of persons, can be said to have overcome. The disciple overcomes *in Christ*—accounted to be identified with him; but this is a principle of faith, not a personal work or act of the believer, as it is said, Rom. iv. 5–8, “To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as (or, in the same manner as) David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness (or justification) without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.” So we may say, the principle of sovereign grace, exhibited in the salvation of the sinner, overcomes all the principles of vindictive justice opposed to this salvation.

Happy, certainly, must he be who can see his salvation resting upon such a principle, while he is encouraged to regard his faith in this mystery as a token of his destined participation of the benefit to be enjoyed. This faith we suppose to be acquired, instrumentally, in proportion as the disciple is enabled to contemplate the various principles of truth combined in the mystery of redemption. As a person’s confidence in the power, or capability, of a complicated piece of machinery to perform a certain work, is increased in proportion as he finds, upon examination, a perfect adaptation and sufficiency in all its parts; in like manner, the faith of the Christian in the work of his Redeemer is strengthened and confirmed, in proportion as he perceives the power and peculiar adaptation of all the principles of

truth entering into the composition of this divine plan or economy. To exhibit these peculiarities, we suppose to be the design of the Apocalypse ; that by this the disciple may be edified, or built up in faith and love. Principles of truth being to the mystery of redemption, what principles of physics are to the mysterious economy by which the evolutions and revolutions of the heavenly bodies are directed and controlled. The more we are enabled to contemplate either of these systems, the more confidence we have in the power, and wisdom, and benevolence of the Sovereign author of both. This confidence in physical things, is faith in spiritual things.

Whatever difference of opinion there may be on this subject, it must be admitted that the *tree of life* can represent nothing else than that which furnishes the means of eternal life, and the Scriptures assure us that *Christ crucified* is the only means by which this eternal life can be secured. The cross, or Christ, must then be this *wood*, or *tree of life*, *Ξύλον ζωῆς*, as it is said, 1 Pet. ii. 24, “ Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree,” or wood, (*ξύλον*)—“ by whose stripes” (wounds or sufferings, *Μώλαι*) “ ye are healed ;”—Acts xiii. 29, And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the *tree* ;—and Gal. iii. 13, Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us ; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a *tree*. There can be no other tree of life. To eat of this tree, on the part of the disciple, must be to share in the benefit of this vicarious sacrifice : on the part of a principle of faith, it must consist in being manifested to belong to this propitiatory element of the plan of salvation—something depending upon it.

§ 48. ‘ Which is in the midst of the paradise of God,’ or of my God, according to some editions. The difference is not material, since, as we have already suggested, Christ retains his distinct sonship, till the final manifestation, when God will appear to be all in all.

The term PARADISE is met with only in two other places of the New Testament, viz., Luke xxiii. 43, the assurance given by Jesus to the malefactor, “ To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise ;” and 2 Cor. xii. 4, where Paul speaks of one caught up into paradise. In our common version of the Old Testament, the word does not occur at all ; but the term there rendered *garden*, as applied to the garden of Eden, and the garden of God, is uniformly rendered in the Septuagint by the word *Παράδεισος*, (Paradise.) The word is supposed to have been adopted into the Greek language from the Persian, (Rob. Lex. 543.) However this may be, it seems to have been generally understood in the times of the apostles ; and we may suppose it to have been understood by them in the sense and with the association of ideas attached to it by the Greeks and others of those days. Literally, it is said to be an appellation given to a *park* or hunting ground,



a place of security as well as a place of enjoyment. Applied, as it is, in the Septuagint to the garden of Eden, it is evidently understood to be applicable to a place where there is every provision for sustenance and for enjoyment—*every plant pleasant to the eye and good for food*. Hence, metaphorically, it has been employed to express the condition of the blessed in a future state, in which sense we may presume it was intended to be understood by the thief on the cross. It is also said to be figuratively employed to express the sacred Scriptures, or that revelation, perhaps, by them, in which the tree of life may be said to be found. *Notat* (says Suicerus) *scripturam sacram, quæ frequenter Paradiso confertur*. In this figurative, or rather in a spiritual sense, we suppose the term to be employed in the Apocalypse. As it is said, Cant. viii. 13, Thou that dwellest in the *gardens*, the companions hearken to thy voice: Cause me to hear.

Jesus, the Redeemer, is to be found in, or dwelling in, the Scriptures; but it is more particularly in the economy of redemption, or plan of salvation, revealed in those Scriptures, that he may be said to dwell. So it is by participating in the benefits and privileges of that plan, that his followers may be said also to dwell, or to be with him—as in a garden, park, or paradise; a position where there is abundant provision for eternal life, where there is ample security from evil or danger, and where all is to be found that is necessary for the attainment of endless happiness.

In this economy, or paradise of God, the tree of life (the cross of Christ) occupies a prominent position; the one is in the midst of the other, as the tree of life once stood in the midst of the garden of Eden, (Genesis ii. 9.)

The appellation, the paradise of God, or of my God, may be intended to point out something in contradistinction to the first paradise, or to that position in a spiritual sense of which the first paradise was intended as an illustration.

The first paradise was of a temporary character, and its enjoyment was conditional. The second paradise is eternal, and its enjoyment unconditional, for it is *freely* given, without money and without price. So long as our first parents were ignorant of the difference between good and evil, they were accounted innocent in the sight of God. They were *alive*, as the apostle says, *without the law*, (Rom. vii. 9.) We are not obliged to suppose their *natures* more perfect then, than they were afterwards; but whatever of imperfection or of depravity existed in them, so long as they had not tasted of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, they were not held accountable as those subject to the law. For them, with the exception of a single command only, there was no law; and sin is not imputed when there is no law, Rom. v. 13. If they acted morally wrong, with one exception, it was the action of ignorance, and for this the tree of life stood

in the midst of the garden, and they in common with the whole creation around them enjoyed the benefit of its healing influence. No sooner had they tasted of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, however, than their whole position was changed. They were now accountable beings—the law came, sin revived, and they died—they were now subject to condemnation for every action not morally correct. The plea of ignorance no longer availed them; they now stood upon their own merits, and in this position, they could no longer participate in the benefits of the tree of life. The condition of the enjoyment of the first paradise was, that those who possessed it should be ignorant of good and evil, and consequently should not be dependent for this enjoyment upon any merit of their own. To become *wise* was to become accountable; and every creature not perfect as God is perfect, if accountable, must be in a state of condemnation—a state spiritually called *death*. The declaration of the Almighty—in *the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*—was an annunciation of the nature of things. It was an annunciation of the truth, that the only way in which the creature can be innocent in the sight of God, is by being in that position in which sin is not imputed; and consequently in that position in which the subject of judgment is not treated upon his own merits.

Our first parents, however, preferred a position under the law—at least our first mother did so; she thought it was a good thing to be *wise*. We think, if we had been in their place, we should not have acted thus; but every self-righteous person does the same thing. He prefers being under the law—he wishes to stand upon his own merits—he braves the condemnation which the law denounces against every soul of man that doeth evil. In this position man is virtually expelled from paradise—in this position, he cannot, in the nature of things, partake of the tree of life. In this emergency, what is the remedy? How is man to be brought back to his original state—not of ignorance, but of *imputed* innocence? Imputed innocence, too, notwithstanding his knowledge of good and evil—under the law, and yet delivered from its penalties! The remedy, we may say, has been applied without his consent. In despite of his own self-righteous pertinacity, Christ has fulfilled the law in man's behalf. He has endured its penalties—He has absorbed, as it were, in his own merits, all the baleful influence of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and He now stands in the midst of the paradise of God—the tree of life, free of access to all who draw near to participate in its fruit.

The disciple is now again in a position of accounted innocence; a position in which iniquity is not imputed to him. Not now because he is ignorant, but because, in the sight of God, he is looked upon as substituted in the place of him who was without sin; who became sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 21. Such is

the ample provision pre-eminently to be called, in a spiritual sense, the *paradise of God*—a provision furnishing all the requisites for a position of perfect security from the wrath to come; and for insuring the enjoyment of endless happiness. As it is said, Ps. xci. 1, “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” So, John xix. 2, 3, “In my father’s house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, ye may be also;” or, as it is expressed by Paul, 2 Cor. v. 1, “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands—eternal in the heavens.”

The bliss of the first paradise being, in respect to the law, the bliss of ignorance, it may be called the bliss of the paradise of *man*. The bliss of the second paradise is that of justification, through the imputed righteousness of Jehovah, and may be, therefore, appropriately styled the Paradise of God. In the first paradise, man, with a knowledge of good and evil, was precluded from sharing in the benefit of the tree of life, (Gen. iii. 22–24;) in the second, notwithstanding this knowledge, he is not only permitted, but called upon, to put forth his hand and eat, and live for ever.

### *Epistle to the Angel of the Church in Smyrna.*

V. 8. And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; these things saith the first and the last, which was dead and is alive.

Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Σμύρνῃ ἐκκλησίας γράψον· τὰδε λέγει ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, ὃς ἐγένετο νεκρὸς καὶ ἔζησεν.

§ 49. The announcement here shows the message, from the characteristics already analyzed, (§§ 22 and 36,) to come from the same source as the preceding, viz., from Jesus, the beginning and the ending of the economy of redemption; “who was delivered for our offences and was raised for our justification, and is ever at the right hand of God to make intercession for us,” (Rom. viii. 34; iv. 25.)

V. 9. I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and (I know) the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα καὶ τὴν θλίψιν καὶ τὴν πτωχείαν (ἀλλὰ πλούσιος εἶ) καὶ τὴν βλασφημίαν ἐκ τῶν λεγόντων Ἰουδαίους εἶναι ἑαυτοὺς καὶ οὐκ εἶσιν, ἀλλὰ συναγωγὴ τοῦ σατανᾶ.

‘I know thy works.’—That is, the works of the angel, the elements of the system, the tendency of its principles. This declaration is made to each of the seven churches, even to the Laodicean angel, so especially rebuked for lukewarmness. The sense must therefore be, I know thy works, both those which are good and those which are otherwise.

‘And tribulation.’—The term *θλίψις*, rendered here and elsewhere tribulation, or affliction, carries with it an idea of pressure, or compression. We may suppose the system represented to afford that peculiar view of reli-



gious faith which produces a sense of mental pressure, as it were, under a load of duty. The disciple, instead of rejoicing in Christ, goes mourning all his days, under an impression of his dependence upon some merit of his own; in respect to which he is at the same time continually sensible of his deficiency. Instead of enjoying the gospel air of freedom, he feels himself imprisoned even in a closer state of confinement than those who are altogether dependent upon works of the law. Instead of throwing himself upon the mercy of God, as it is exhibited in Christ, he is under continual apprehension of vindictive judgment. His language is that of complaint—"Thou puttest my feet in the stocks, and lookest narrowly upon all my paths," Job xiii. 27. "Blessed are they that mourn," it is said, "for they shall be comforted." Here is a mourning, however, without the comfort. Godly sorrow worketh repentance, (change of mind,) not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world worketh death, (2 Cor. vii. 10.) We may suppose a conviction of sin to work that sorrow which leads to an utter renunciation of self-dependence. This *change of mind*, directing the disciple to the Saviour, is a repentance unto life; but the conviction of sin which goes no further than to prompt the disciple to greater efforts in fulfilling the law for himself, confining his views to some propitiation of his own working out, is a sorrow of the world, that worketh death. Such we may suppose to be the tribulation of this system. It exhibited the cause of mourning, but not the means of comfort.

§ 50. 'And poverty, (but thou art rich.)'—Corresponding with the tribulation, or compressing view, of the system, is its poverty. Personified as a disciple, it is supposed to look to its own want of merit, which, indeed, is a cause of tribulation; but besides this, it overlooked the true riches—those imputed merits of Christ which constitute the only real wealth. Every Christian adopted in Christ, and sharing in his imputed righteousness, or in the imputation of his merits, must be *rich* in effect, because sovereign grace has given him this inheritance. But every such Christian may not enjoy the knowledge of this truth. Like the servant of the prophet, although there are more for him than there are against him, he does not perceive this till his eyes are opened. He is, in fact, *rich in Christ*; while, looking only to his own unworthiness, he feels really poor. As there may be a tribulation, or sense of sin, which does not lead the mind to dependence upon the atonement of Christ, so there may be a sense of poverty or unworthiness which does not lead to a trust in the merits or riches of Christ. As it is said, *Blessed are the poor in spirit, (or, in a spiritual sense,) for their's is the kingdom of heaven, (they are rich.)* But they do not enjoy their blessedness till they come to the knowledge of the truth, or of their true position. This we may suppose to be the defect of the system of the Smyrnian Church.

The ransom of a man's life it is said is his riches, (Prov. xiii. 8.) The

means of ransoming eternal life, (Job xxxiii. 24,) must be the greatest of all riches. Such as are called, (Prov. viii. 18,) durable riches and righteousness. To be without this means is real poverty, to possess them is to be indeed rich. To believe that we do possess them, may be said to be rich in faith—a faith possessed by the Apostle Paul, as he describes it, (Phil. iii. 7,)—but an element of faith, wanting we suppose in the system represented by the angel of the Church of Smyrna. The reason of this deficiency is probably alluded to, under the figure of the blasphemous errors of certain false teachers introducing themselves into the Church. The system having to contend with the erroneous principles introduced into it, as the pastor of a congregation, in a literal sense, might have to contend with those whose doctrines were calculated to turn his people from the truth.

§ 51. ‘The blasphemy of them which say they are Jews,’ &c. Blasphemy, according to John x. 33, consists essentially in making one’s self God, or equal with God. Whoever is the efficient author of man’s salvation, to him must the glory of that work redound. If man were saved by his own merits, he would be the efficient author of his own salvation. In such case man would be glorified by the work, and not God. If man represent himself to be thus the author of his own salvation, he puts himself in the place of God; he makes himself equal with God, and this is *blasphemy*; not in words, perhaps, but in effect.

The Jews were particularly scrupulous in eschewing the sin of blasphemy; and yet here is an error charged particularly upon those who professed themselves to be Jews:—“He is not a Jew, says Paul, (Rom. ii. 28, 29,) which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew (in a spiritual sense) who is one inwardly: and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter: of which the praise is not of man, but of God;” something of which the praise does not belong to man, but to God. For the sinner cannot be entitled to praise for that which God has wrought either in him or for him.

The words rendered inwardly, as above, are *ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ*, in the hidden, or *mystic sense*; as the hidden wisdom, 1 Cor. ii. 7; and the hidden manna, Rev. ii. 17. He is a Jew who is so in that hidden, or mystic, or spiritual sense which is represented or symbolized by the literal Jew. In this spiritual sense we suppose the really uncircumcised to be those depending upon the carnal or self-righteous covering of their own merits, to hide the shame of their guilt in the sight of God: whereas, he is the true Jew, or the truly circumcised, who renounces all dependence upon such covering; counting all merits of his own but loss, and trusting wholly to the robe of Christ’s imputed righteousness to cover his iniquities, and to protect him from the wrath to come.

§ 52. The *heart*, in Scripture, we suppose to be put for what we call

the *mind*—the inmost fountain of thought and motive, whence all the springs of action originate; as the blood, propelled from the physical heart, circulates through the whole corporeal system. The characteristic of the circumcised mind, or heart, must be a conviction of entire unworthiness—entire destitution of merit. Few, perhaps, possess this conviction to its full extent; and, if the spiritual circumcision necessary to bring the disciple within the pale of the economy of salvation, depended altogether upon the state of his own mind, who might not have reason to dread the awful sentence of excommunication—"That soul shall be cut off from his people," Ex. xii. 15. But, as the operation upon the Hebrew infant was not performed by itself, but by its parents, so we may say of the spiritual rite, that it is not an act of the disciple, but of his Heavenly Father. To God the praise belongs, not to man. However imperfect the believer's views in this life, God has graciously placed him in that position of circumcision, in which his salvation must be of grace, and not of debt. If his faith be sufficiently enlightened, he must see this even here, and his only motive of conduct will be that of grateful love, this motive operating through his whole moral system; but whether he see this or not in this life, he cannot but know, and see, and feel it hereafter. Corresponding with this, those who say they are Jews, and are not, we may take to be those pretending to this circumcision of mind—pretending to have renounced all dependence upon their own merits, but not having actually done so. Whatever their professions may be, they still go about to establish, and still trust in some supposed righteousness, or worthiness, of their own.

These things we have *transferred in a figure*, as the apostle terms it, (1 Cor. iv. 6,) to the disciple, by way of illustration; but we suppose these false professors, or teachers of false doctrines, to be principles, or elements of doctrine, and not human beings. The professed tendency of these principles comporting with the spiritual circumcision alluded to, but their real tendency being that of blasphemously representing man as the author of his own salvation.

§ 53. These principles are spoken of as belonging to the synagogue or assembly of Satan, that is, emanating from the Satanic system, or Satanic collection of doctrines; the synagogue of Satan being thus an opposite of the Church, or of a church of Christ:—the term *synagogue*, signifying a collection of people, or things, in which respect it corresponds with the term *ecclesia*, (church,) except that the latter carries with it the idea of selection, which the former does not. As we have supposed a church (*ecclesia*) in the apocalyptic sense to represent an assembly of elect or sanctioned principles, so we suppose a synagogue to represent an assembly of principles not elect, not sanctioned. The synagogue of Satan being an assembly even of repudiated principles.



By Rev. xii. 9 and 10, we find the terms Satan, the Devil, the great dragon, the old serpent, the accuser of the brethren, to be only so many different appellations of the same being, or character. The term Satan from the Hebrew, and Devil (*Diabolos*) from the Greek, signifying also an accuser, such as an adversary at law, or one occupying the place of a public prosecutor—the opposite of a mediator, or intercessor, or redeemer. We shall have occasion to treat this subject more at large hereafter: meantime, we assume the peculiar characteristic of Satan to be that of a legal adversary; one whose office it is to enforce the action of the law, to render the subjects of his perquisitions obnoxious to the law, and in fine, to bring the disciple under the condemnation of the law, to be subjected to its penalties, in despite of the redemption wrought out in his behalf. Thus, to say that an element of doctrine is a principle of Satan, or that it belongs to the *Synagogue* of Satan, is equivalent to saying that it is an element of legal accusation, as opposed to an element of the economy of salvation by grace. Accordingly, it is said of these principles of self-righteousness, spoken of figuratively as teachers, professing to be Jews, without really being so, that they are not only false in this respect, but that they actually belong to the legal system of accusation; a system entirely opposed to the whole spirit and purport of the gospel. They are hypocritical in pretension, blasphemous in character, and condemnatory, or working condemnation in their tendency.

V. 10. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. Behold the devil shall cast (some) of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown, or the crown, of life.

Μηδὲν φοβοῦ ὃ μέλλεις πάσχειν. ἰδοὺ, μέλλει βαλεῖν ὁ διάβολος ἐξ ὑμῶν εἰς φυλακὴν, ἵνα πειρασθῇτε· καὶ ἔξετε θλίψιν ἡμερῶν δέκα. γίνου πιστὸς ἄχρι θανάτου, καὶ δώσω σοι τὸν στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς.

§ 54. ‘Fear none of these things,’ &c.—The system is figuratively represented as a disciple, having to contend with those who teach doctrines of self-justification, and in doing so, appeals to the accusing principles of the legal dispensation. In this position, the language of the disciple should be that spoken by the mouth of the prophet, Is. l. 8, “He is near that justifieth me: who will contend with me? Behold the Lord God will help me; who is he that shall condemn me?” The circumstances, and the encouragement given, corresponding with those alluded to, Is. xli. 10–13. The suffering is the apprehension of the action of legal principles. As the minds of certain of the disciples were troubled, (*Acts xv. 1, 5, 24,*) by those representing circumcision, and the keeping of the law, as indispensable to salvation, a doctrine declared by the apostles to be altogether unauthorized.

‘Behold, the Devil’ (the accuser) ‘shall cast (some) of you into prison.’

—That is, into a place of custody, in order that ye may be tried. The trial does not consist in being in the prison, but is something consequent to it. The public prosecutor seizes upon delinquents, and causes them to be imprisoned, preparatory to their trial. So certain principles of this evangelical system are seized upon by the element of accusation, for the purpose of trying, or testing, their efficacy in the work of salvation.

‘And ye shall have tribulation,’ or compression; that is, ye shall be tried.—Certain of the principles emanating from this system, are to undergo the test. The word *some* is not in the original. The words ἐξ ὑμῶν, imply *that which is from you*. It may be all the principles emanating from this system are to be thus tried,—the elements of legal accusation being brought to act on one side, while those of justification by grace are exhibited on the other. Nevertheless, the assurance remains, as it is expressed, Is. li. 7, 8, “Fear ye not the reproach of men; neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool; but my righteousness shall be forever, and my salvation from generation to generation.”

§ 55. ‘Ten days.’—A definite term for an indefinite; a decimal number of days for a whole period; a short period for a long one. The very shortness of the period, being intended to show the figurative character of the term; as every reader is struck, at first sight, with the conviction that the literal sense is not at all to be taken into consideration. Had the time mentioned been ten years, or even ten months, we might have supposed it to apply literally to some specific portion of duration; but as the trial is so exceedingly short as *ten days*, it is evident that something else is intended, and that something else we may suppose to be the whole period of duration, from the time of the announcement till the final manifestation of truth, when every trial of this kind must necessarily terminate. The perfect manifestation of the truths of the plan of salvation by sovereign grace, putting an end, in the nature of the case, to all further efforts at establishing the principles of self-justification, or at enforcing those of legal accusation.

‘Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee *the* crown of life.’—All the Greek editions (according to Rob. ed. with Hahn’s notes, New-York, 1842,) have the definite article here; indicating but one crown, as there is but one righteousness. So Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 8, speaks of *the* crown of righteousness laid up for him and others, and not *a* crown, as our common version has rendered it.

The word translated *crown* in this place, (στέφανος,) signifies the kind of crown given to conquerors at the public games; differing in this, from the word δαδῆμα, which we also render *crown*, but which applies to the insignia of supreme authority, and would be more properly rendered by the term diadem. The first kind of crown is alluded to by Paul, 1 Cor. ix. 25,

“They do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible.” This crown is the token of success in the contest or struggle, upon occasions of which it is given, and may be viewed, not as the reward itself, but as the evidence of the victor’s title to his reward; as, amongst the ancients, public games were sometimes instituted to decide upon the election of a chief or ruler. The victor at the games, was crowned with a garland, or wreath; and we may suppose him, at the conclusion of the exhibition, to have proffered this crown as the evidence of his claim to promotion. So, to the followers of Jesus, the imputed righteousness of their Redeemer is the evidence of their victory over the powers of legal condemnation; and consequently, the token, or crown, upon which they depend for the inheritance of eternal life—a crown of his righteousness, and not of their own, and thence distinguished as *the* crown of righteousness, and *THE* crown of life—the crown by which eternal life is secured. Their Saviour bore for them the crown of thorns, which they should have borne; and they receive from him, as a matter of grace, the crown of righteousness to which he alone had a title.

The other kind of crown, (the diadem,) is that represented to be on the heads of the red dragon, and of the beast, Rev. xii. 3, and xiii. 1. Not that these were either of them entitled to sovereignty, but that they are supposed to assume the prerogative; as to assume the diadem, has been a common figure of speech for pretending to imperial sway. In contradistinction to these false pretensions, it is said of the *Word of God*, that on his head he had “many diadems,” (Rev. xix. 12.) The disciple is nowhere said to receive a *diadem*, or *the diadem*; but he receives a crown, as the token of his success in the contest of faith.

Such a token of victory is spoken of as allotted to the system, or angel of this church, figuratively, on condition of its faithfulness to death. As we may say, in the nature of the case, if the system prove to be correct,—if it comport with the elements of the economy of grace throughout—if this be manifested by its abiding the tests and trials to which it is to be exposed, then it is manifested to be itself the truth, and this manifestation is spoken of under the figure of allotting a crown to an individual disciple; the period of final manifestation, corresponding with this figure, being alluded to under the appellation of death.

V. 11. He that hath an ear, &c.

He that overcometh, shall not be hurt at the second death.

ὁ ἔχων οὖς, &c.

ὁ νικῶν οὐ μὴ ὑβιζήσῃ ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου τοῦ δευτέρου.

§ 56. ‘He that hath an ear,’ &c.—This is a repetition of the hint, as we conceive it to be, given to all who read the book, of the mystic sense of the passage; the remarks already made upon these words (§ 46) have been, perhaps, sufficient.



'He that overcometh.'—These words are thrown into the same verse with the hint just spoken of, as if particularly connected with it. But we are to bear in mind, throughout the book, that in the original manuscripts there was no separation of chapters, or verses, and here probably, as elsewhere, the admonition as to the mystic sense is no more peculiar to what follows, or to what is in the verse with it, than to that which precedes it.

ὁ νικῶν—'The overcoming shall not be hurt at the second death.'—A promise is given to him that overcometh in each of these seven addresses. The promises are different, but we may presume the enjoyment of one to be no way inconsistent with that of either of the others. The same *overcoming* individual, whatever is to be understood by the term, may enjoy the fruition of all of these promises—perhaps they all constitute but one promise. In the preceding epistle, *the overcoming* was to partake of the tree of life. In the present, the faithful unto death is to receive *the crown of life*. To one is promised the means of eternal life, as food constitutes the means of natural life; to the other is promised the evidence of title to the same life,—this evidence of title being itself also a means. But in addition to this, *the overcoming* is promised here exemption from *hurt at the second death*.

The verb rendered *hurt*, ἀδικέω, usually signifies doing an injury, in the legal sense of the term—as Matt. xx. 13. Friend, I do thee no wrong, οὐκ ἀδικῶ σε. It is evident, however, that a promise to him that overcometh, that he should not suffer *unjustly* from the second death, could not be what is here intended. The noun of the same formation is rendered in Scripture by the word *unrighteousness*; and the verb and participle are both used, Rev. xxii. 11, as the opposite of δικαιώω, signifying in the active voice to *justify*, and in the passive, Matt. xii. 37, and in Paul's epistles, to be justified. Hence we may safely consider the *hurt*, or injury alluded to here, and of which the second death is supposed to be the occasion, to be the opposite of justification.

He that overcometh shall not be deprived of justification by or at the second death. The particle translated *of* in this place, ἐκ, signifies *out of*,—something proceeding from—as, if we suppose this second death to represent a system, or means of trial, the words are equivalent to the declaration thus, he that overcometh shall not be condemned, or have his justification impaired by any principle, or power, emanating from that which is termed the *second death*, (§ 174.)

§ 57. We find, by Rev. xx. 14, that the lake of fire, into which death and hell were cast, is the second death. In remarking upon Rev. i. 18, we have seen (§§ 33, 37, 38) that death and hell, or Hades, are mysteries, or systems, of which Christ holds the keys; the means of unlocking or of interpreting these systems being found in him. The element of fire we suppose to represent the revealed Word of God, (Jer. xxiii. 29,) by which

all doctrines or principles are to be tried, and by which all that is false in them is to be consumed, or manifested to be worthless, (1 Cor. iii. 13.) A lake or pit of fire, as it were an immense furnace, we suppose to be a very powerful revelation, or development of the revealed word, which is to act in a more than ordinary manner, in trying the truth, and testing the falsehood of all principles, or elements of doctrine, at that period of peculiar manifestation, when these two anti-evangelic systems, Death and Hades, are to meet their final destruction. This instrument of trial is also spoken of as a lake of fire and brimstone; we suppose in allusion to the popular opinion that the sulphuric composition of volcanic fires is the cause of their perpetuity. Hence a lake of fire and sulphur, or brimstone, is an instrument of trial, as by fire, perpetual and eternal. To be *hurt* by this second death, is to be manifested in this final trial to be in a state the opposite of justification. A principle hurt or unjustified by this trial, or test, is one manifested to be inconsistent with divine truth—inconsistent with the truth of sovereign grace. Such a fate as this the angel of the church in Smyrna is assured cannot attend the overcoming principle, *ὁ νικῶν*. The principle of salvation, through the imputed righteousness of Christ, will abide the test of the revealed word in its most spiritual sense. And this we suppose to be pre-eminently the overcoming principle of faith—the principle of sovereign grace, which overcomes every principle of legal condemnation.

*Epistle to the Angel of the Church of Pergamos.*

V. 12. And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; these things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two

*Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Περγῶν ἐκκλησίας γράψον· τὰδε λέγει ὁ ἔχων τὴν ῥομφαίαν τὴν δίστομον τὴν ὀξείαν·*

§ 58. ‘He that hath the sharp sword.’—Of the different titles assumed by the speaker in addressing the churches, six refer us back distinctly to the account given in the first chapter, of the form and language of the one like unto the Son of man, while the title assumed in the seventh address leads to the faithful witness, declared (Rev. i. 5) to be Jesus Christ, thus identifying the form seen in the midst of the golden candlesticks, with one of the personifications of the source of grace and peace.

The sharp sword is not an uncommon figure in Scripture. David says of the enemies of his *soul*, Ps. lvii. 4, alluding no doubt to the legal principles of condemnation, that their tongue is a sharp sword; and again, Ps. lxiv. 3, “who whet their tongue like a sword,” preparatory to a work of legal destruction. The spirit of truth and the spirit of error have each their respective swords; but the *two-edged sword* seems to be the peculiar weapon of the Holy Spirit; and this we have already described as divine revelation by the written word with its twofold sense, (§ 33.)

V. 13. I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, (even) where Satan's seat (is): and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas (was) my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

Γινῶκα τὰ ἔργα σου καὶ ποῦ κατοικεῖς, ὅπου ὁ θρόνος τοῦ σατανᾶ· καὶ κρατεῖς τὸ ὄνομα μου, καὶ οὐκ ἠρνήσω τὴν πίστιν μου, καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐν αἷς Ἀντίπας ὁ μάρτυρ μου ὁ πιστός, ὃς ἀπικτήθη παρ' ὑμῶν, ὅπου ὁ σατανᾶς κατοικεῖ.

§ 59. 'I know where thou dwellest.'—To say that the Divine Spirit, here speaking, knew that the angel of the church dwelt in the church, or that the church of Pergamos was located in Pergamos, would be to suppose the enunciation of a mere truism. This dwelling must refer, not to locality, but to *position*. Speaking of a system personified—I know thy position. ✓ This seems to be said in extenuation—as if allowance were made for a certain disadvantage under which this angel laboured—as one who of necessity dwells in a place where he is under restraint from the action of a hostile power.

'Where Satan's seat,' or throne, 'is,'—that is, the seat of his power: ὁ θρόνος τοῦ σατανᾶ,—the throne of the Satan. The seat of the accuser's power is where the law is in force; for where the law is fulfilled, the legal adversary, or accuser, can have no power. The disadvantage, therefore, under which this *system* labours is, that it admits in some degree at least the continuance of the legal economy. Its position supposes the requisitions of the law to be still unsatisfied—an admission widely differing from the representation of the apostle Paul, Rom. vi. 14, "Ye are not under the law, but under grace;" and Rom. vii. 4 and 7, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law." "We are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of the spirit, and not in oldness of the letter." Opposite to this is the error, that the law continues in force, not merely as a rule of conduct, or guide to what is pleasing in the sight of God, but as a system of penal ordinances, involving the treatment of the disciple on his own merits, and thus subjecting him to the power of the *accuser*.

'And holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith.'—Notwithstanding the false position, as we may call it, of this system, there were two commendable characteristics in it: the holding fast or wielding the name of Christ, as a weapon of defence;—trusting in his name, and pleading the power of his name, and not denying the faith. Such a general sentiment of trust in Christ we often find in individual disciples, mingled with some erroneous views influenced by the spirit of legality. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth (it is said, Rom. x. 9) the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." This holding fast the name of Christ, may correspond with the confession of that name spoken of by Paul; while Paul's belief of the heart corresponds also with the not denying the faith. From the context of this passage in



Romans, it is evident that Paul contemplates but an imperfect knowledge of *truth* on the part of the disciple, who may yet draw the assurance of his salvation from these two simple elementary tokens of divine favour. Such an imperfect view of the scheme of salvation, may be supposed to be possessed by the angel of the church of Pergamos. Represented as a disciple, it might be said of him, with the heart he believed unto righteousness, (or justification,) and with the mouth he made confession unto salvation, giving professedly and confessedly the glory of that salvation to that name, of which it is said, there is none other given amongst men whereby we can be saved.

§ 60. ‘Even in those days wherein Antipas (was) my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.’—The first *was* is supplied by our translators, probably to make the sentence correspond with the use of the relative *who*, preceding the second *was*. It would be taking much less liberty to suppose the name *Antipas* to have been originally written in the *genitive*; which requires only a dropping of the final *s*. On this supposition the sentence might be read, *in those days of Antipas, the faithful witness of me, who was slain on your account, where Satan dwelleth*; that is, under the legal dispensation—the peculiar position of the accuser.

The preposition *παρὰ* translated *among* in our common version, and *apud* in the Latin version of Leusden, might have been rendered *for*, or *on account of*, which meaning it also sometimes has, (Rob. Lex. 541.) The name *Antipas* is composed of the preposition *Ἀντί*, which sometimes signifies *for*, *in the place of*, and *πᾶς*, *all*. The appellation *Antipas* thus signifying *in the place of all*, or instead of all: *pro omnibus*, (Leusd. onomas.)—leading to the suggestion, that this name is put for Christ himself in his vicarious character—add to which the term, rendered here *faithful martyr*, is precisely the same in the original as that rendered, Rev. i. 5, the faithful witness, *ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστός*, a title peculiar to Christ—God the Holy Spirit here speaking of God manifested in the flesh—the personification of the Deity in Jesus Christ—the word made flesh—being the faithful witness, or representation of Jehovah. The word rendered by our translators *even*, is the common conjunction *καὶ* (*and*); which, when repeated as it is here, may be rendered by *also*. The whole sentence is susceptible of being paraphrased as follows: and holdest my name, and hast not denied my faith in those days also of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was slain in your behalf under that dispensation of the law which is characterized as the habitation of the accuser. Christ, the true Antipas, having placed himself in this position, *pro omnibus*, in behalf of all men, especially of those that believe. This we suppose to be spoken of a system represented by an angel, whose fidelity under the circumstances alluded to may be considered an opposite of the conduct of one who, in a parallel situation, denied his master three times before the cock had crowed

thrice. Notwithstanding this fidelity, however, there were defects in the system, arising probably from the peculiarity of the influence adverted to in the first part of the verse—a consequence of dwelling where Satan's seat is.

V. 14. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication.

Ἀλλ' ἔχω κατὰ σοῦ ὀλίγα, ὅτι ἔχεις ἐνὶ κοινοῖς τὴν διδασχὴν Βαλαάμ, ὃς ἐδίδασκε τῷ Βαλάκ βάλειν σκάνδαλον ἐνώπιον τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ, φαγεῖν εἰδωλόθυτα καὶ πορνεύσαι.

§ 61. 'A few things,' &c., small in number, but evidently not unimportant in character. The Pergamean system has within it certain principles, figuratively spoken of as persons, inculcating in a spiritual sense that which Balaam taught in a literal sense.

'The doctrine of Balaam,' &c.—Balaam was sent for by Balak, king of the Moabites, (Numbers xxii. and xxiii.,) to curse Israel, with the promise of great rewards for so doing. His desire of obtaining these rewards was but too evident. The spirit of prophecy, however, was so strong upon him that he could do no otherwise than declare the truth committed to him to speak : but what he could not do as a prophet, he readily did for the compensation promised as a man. He taught Balak how to bring the Israelites into a snare of such a character as he knew must necessarily be followed by disastrous results to that favoured people, at least of a temporary nature. Acting in this, no doubt, upon his knowledge of the rule of divine providence towards them, that their transgressions should be visited with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes, although the loving kindness of their God would not be utterly taken from them.

'A trap,' or stumbling-block, as the term is employed here, must be something causing those affected by it to err from the faith. If meat, says the apostle, 1 Cor. viii. 13, make my brother to offend—that is, place a stumbling-block before him, "I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I place a stumbling-block before my brother." As if he had said, as appears from the context, speaking of the liberty of the people—I will not use my freedom, if my use of it lead a less enlightened brother to suppose that I do that which I do not believe myself at liberty to do, and thence prompt him to do the same thing without my belief of freedom—thereby leading him to sin against his own conscience ; for whatsoever is not of faith is sin, (Rom. xiv. 23.) Here was a doctrine of self-denial, the opposite of that of Balaam, who, to gratify his desire of gain—for a reward, it is said, (Jude 11)—hazarded the welfare of those whom, as a prophet of the Most High, he should have regarded as brethren.

'Things sacrificed to idols.'—The sin of the children of Israel, is spoken of as the eating of things offered to its idols ; not, however, merely in eating the things, (as we learn from 1 Cor. viii. 7,) but in eating them *as*

*things offered to idols*—participating in the act of idolatrous worship. As it is said, 1 Cor. x. 18, “Are not they which eat of the sacrifices, partakers of the altar?” Their offence was idolatry itself.

In a spiritual sense, he who places his hopes of salvation upon any other merit than that of Christ, makes such merit, or the source from which such merit emanates, an idol, or object of religious worship. If he trust to his own righteousness, he must necessarily ascribe his salvation to his own merit. In doing so, he depends upon himself and upon his own ability for that salvation, the glory of which he takes to himself, feeling indebted to himself alone even for his eternal happiness. While working out his salvation, as he considered it, he was actuated by no motive but that of serving and glorifying himself; and now having, as he supposes, effected this object, his obligations of gratitude and love, in his estimation, are to himself. His own self is his idol of worship; and all his works, however good they may appear outwardly, are but so many sacrifices offered to his idol. His error is not in performing works, but in doing them as things offered to an idol.

§ 62. There is a similar analogy between the crime of fornication and the error in doctrine illustrated by it. As the illicit indulgence into which the Israelites were betrayed through the teaching of Balaam, is the opposite of the lawful enjoyments of the marriage state,—the type or figure of the mystic union between Christ and his people,—so the criminal intercourse alluded to, in a spiritual sense, as a matter of faith, is a reliance upon other means of eternal happiness than those of a union and identity with Christ—righteousness of his righteousness, and merit of his merit; as the wife, in relation to her husband, is accounted one and the same person, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, (Gen. ii. 23.) The spiritual body of the disciple’s righteousness being taken out of that of his Redeemer’s, as the woman was taken out of man.

The teachers spoken of as holding or wielding the doctrine of Balaam, in the Pergamean Church, we suppose to symbolize principles leading the disciple astray from views of faith requisite to the true worship of God, and to an undivided reliance upon the merits of Christ: principles personified as teachers, professing, no doubt, to hold the name and not to deny the faith, while the tendency of their doctrine is that here described.

In allusion to errors of this kind, apparently, the apostle Paul speaks of those who cause offences, (*τὰ σκάνδαλα*, stumbling-blocks,) Rom. xvi. 17, 18, as persons serving not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; making use of good words and fair speeches to deceive the simple—teachers actuated by selfish and mercenary views, and probably inculcating principles of a corresponding character; self-righteous principles, perhaps, sustained by literal constructions of the language of revelation—teachers, forsaking the right way and going astray, as it is said, 2 Peter ii. 15, following the way of Balaam, who



loved the wages of unrighteousness—principles diverging from the line of truth, and representing the divine plan of salvation as an economy of *wages*, instead of an economy of *grace*.

V. 15. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. Οὗτως ἔχετε καὶ σὺ νικολαϊτῆς τὴν διδασκίαν τῶν Νικολαϊτῶν ὁμοίως. Or, according to the common editions, ὁ μισῶ.

§ 63. This last ὁ μισῶ, is probably the most correct reading; as it corresponds with the expressions before made use of on occasion of mentioning the same doctrine. The word ὁμοίως, on the contrary, after the καὶ at the commencement of the verse, would appear almost a pleonasm; unless we suppose it is intended to refer us back to what is said of this doctrine in the address to the Ephesian angel. The result in such case would be the same as if we adopted the expression, *I hate*.

We have already noticed the character of this Nicolaitan doctrine, (§ 45.) that it was probably something seducing the mind from the true faith, as the appellation signifies something *overcoming the people*. We have also noticed that the verb translated hold, signifies also to wield; as in the use of a weapon of offence or defence. The *holders* of this doctrine being, not merely passive believers, but those who taught its principles polemically—or if principles themselves are spoken of, they are such as maintain these Nicolaitan views.

‘Which thing I hate.’—Some light is thrown on this expression by comparing it with Jude 23, “Hating the garments spotted with the flesh.” *μισοῦντες καὶ τὸν ἀπὸ τῆς σαρκὸς ἐπιλωμέρον χιτῶνα*. Flesh, as we have before noticed, is a figure of moral perfection; as, in the human form, it is essential to physical perfection. The flesh of Christ represents his righteousness; flesh generally, as of created beings, represents human pretensions to righteousness—the supposed or pretended moral perfections of man. The garments spoken of by the apostle, are without doubt garments of salvation—means of salvation to protect the soul and cover the shame of guilt, as the literal garment protects and covers the human body. The only garment of this spiritual kind without spot, is the perfect robe of divine righteousness obtained by imputation. A garment of salvation, spotted by the flesh, is a supposed robe of divine righteousness, intermingled or spotted with a certain portion of pretended human perfection—a robe partly of Christ’s righteousness, and partly of man’s merits.

This pretension of dividing with Christ the glory of redemption, must be peculiarly hateful to him, who has declared that he will not give his glory to another, Is. xlii. 8, and xlviii. 11, and it should be equally hateful to every disciple jealous of the honour of his Master. The Christian is thus especially called upon to hate this garment spotted by the flesh: while the doctrine

represented by this garment is declared to be peculiarly hateful to the Holy Spirit. This peculiar error of mixing up our own merits with those of our Saviour, and claiming, as it were, at least a part of the honour due to him, seems to partake of the robbery for burnt offering spoken of, Is. lxi. 8. It may also be typically alluded to in the prohibition, Lev. xix. 19, "Thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed: neither shall a garment mingled of linen and woollen come upon thee."

Vs. 16, 17. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against thee with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.

Μετανόησον οὖν· εἰ δὲ μή, ἔρχομαί σοι ταχὺ καὶ πολεμήσω μετ' αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ ῥομφαίᾳ τοῦ στόματός μου. Ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις· τῷ νικῶντι, δώσω αὐτῷ τοῦ μάννα τοῦ κεκρυμμένου, καὶ δώσω αὐτῷ ψῆφον λευκὴν καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ψῆφον ὄνομα καινὸν γεγραμμένον, ὃ οὐδεὶς οἶδεν εἰ μὴ ὁ λαμβάνων.

§ 64. 'Repent.'—This term we have already noticed (§ 44) as signifying a change of mind or views; and this we may add, not merely with regard to one general view of matters of religion, but with regard to a view, or views, of any particular subject. The angels of the churches do not represent the heathen, or the unconverted, or opposers of Christianity. On the contrary, they are addressed as professors of Christian faith, as those holding fast the name of Jesus, and not denying his faith—as those who have borne, and have been patient, and have laboured for his name's sake, and yet they are called upon to *repent*; that is, to change their minds, or views, in respect to certain points of doctrine, or, as systems to expurgate their systems of certain errors. They are not threatened with the loss of their souls, or with eternal perdition, if they do not repent, or thus change their views; but they are threatened in one case with the removal of the candlestick, or church, with which the angel is connected; and in the other, with the speaker's coming and contending against them with the sword of his mouth. As a general rule, therefore, we may say that repentance, *μετάνοια*, is a change of mind; but to understand in what respect it is spoken of as a change of mind, we must take into consideration the circumstances of each case under which the term is used. In the present case, the angel, or system of Pergamos, was to change in respect to the errors represented by the teachers of the Balaam and Nicolaitan doctrines.

'I will come unto thee *quickly*,'—that is, suddenly, (§ 4,) intellectually equivalent to a sudden development of truth.

'And fight against thee.'—The contention of truth with error. The instrument—"the sword of my mouth,"—the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, with its twofold interpretation, *the two-mouthed sword of the mouth of God*. The weapons of our warfare, says the apostle, are not

carnal, (2 Cor. x. 4,) they are not *material*, of course ;—not only so, they are not literal—"They are mighty to the pulling down of strong holds," but their might is not in the letter, but in the *spirit* of revealed truth.

§ 65. 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna.' To the overcoming *principle*, as we have supposed it to be, will be given the manifestation of its participation in the element of eternal life, designated as the *hidden manna*. "I am the bread of life," said Jesus, "I am the bread which came down from heaven. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead."—The literal manna could not preserve them from death, it could prolong life only for a time, but the hidden or spiritual manna secures eternal life. "The bread which I give is my flesh, which I give for the life of the world."—The moral perfection, the righteousness of Christ, are given for the salvation of the world. "Except ye eat the *flesh* of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you:" equivalent to the declaration, Except ye participate in the righteousness and atonement of Jesus Christ, ye can have no hope of eternal life. "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."—To whomsoever the merit of Christ's righteousness and of his atonement is imputed, to them the assurance is given of a new existence. "For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."—The righteousness of Christ, enjoyed by imputation, is a means of sustenance for eternal life, as his atonement is the means of saving the sinner from eternal perdition. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him."—The disciple participating by imputation in these merits of Christ, is identified or counted identic with him in the sight of God ; they in him, and he in them. This is the bread that came down from heaven, and those that participate in this bread shall live for ever. Here three substances, manna, bread, and flesh, are severally spoken of as figures of the means of eternal life.

God so loved the world that he gave his own Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but should have eternal life, (John iii. 16.) Jesus Christ gave himself, we are also told, (1 Thess. v. 10, and Gal. i. 4,) that we might live together with him. Christ himself, therefore, must be the hidden manna, as he is the spiritual bread of life, to be participated in by the overcoming principle (ὁ νικῶν).

He gave himself, his flesh and blood.—But we know that literally his *body* saw no corruption ; although the spirit separated from the body on the cross, that spirit and that body, on the third day, were again reunited. Jesus reassumed the same material body, the same flesh, and the same bones ; consequently we must presume that when he speaks of *giving* his body, and of the eating of his flesh, he alludes to something else than the material objects bearing these names ; and this something else we suppose to be, the



body of his merits. His flesh representing his righteousness or moral perfection, and his blood being the figure of his virtual propitiation in behalf of the sinner—as the physical blood is the essential of natural life ; and flesh, not only as an article of food, like bread, is a means of sustaining life, but is also essential to the beauty of the natural body. The beauty of the Lord consisting in the *flesh* of his moral perfection, his righteousness ; in allusion to which it is said, Is. xxxiii. 17, Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty ; and Ps. xc. 17, Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us : and as the want of this righteousness on the part of the disciple is spoken of by the prophet under the figure of leanness—Is. xxiv. 16, “ From the uttermost parts of the earth have we heard songs, glory to the righteous ; but *I* said, My leanness, my leanness, wo is me !”

Such is the *hidden manna*—typically represented by the literal manna under the old dispensation, and symbolically set forth under the new dispensation in the bread of the last supper :—that bread representing literally the physical flesh of Christ ; but spiritually, his righteousness, which, as imputed by sovereign grace to those who are made participators of it, may in the strongest sense be pronounced the true bread, or hidden manna, which comes down from heaven.

This hidden manna, it is said, will be given to him that overcometh ; that is, we suppose, *ὁ νικῶν*, the principle overcoming the requisitions of the law, will be manifested to be a part of this arrangement by which the righteousness of Jehovah is imputed to the disciple ; for, in fact, it is this which gives to *the overcoming*, the power to overcome.

§ 66. ‘ And will give him a white stone.’—This is supposed to be an allusion to an ancient custom of delivering a white stone to such as were acquitted on trial, in token of a full and public pardon, or absolution, or justification. Stones, it is also said, were used by the ancients in criminal processes as votes or ballots ; a white stone implying acquittal, and a black one condemnation :—corresponding as a token with the result ascribed, to a participation of the hidden manna. The means of obtaining forgiveness, and those of obtaining eternal life, are generally coupled together in the Scriptures, showing two things to be essential to future happiness : an atonement to save from the punishment of actual transgression, and a positive righteousness to furnish a title to reward. Christ died for our sins ; but propitiation alone would only save from punishment. Our great mediator and advocate has done more. He offers his own righteousness in our behalf, that we may inherit eternal happiness as the reward of his merits—a reward apparently alluded to, Col. iii. 24. Of this process of justification, as well as of pardon, the white stone may be the token.

It is scarcely correct, however, to represent a person charged with crime as both acquitted and pardoned. For he that is acquitted, or pronounced

innocent, needs no pardon ; as it is only after actual condemnation that the accused can be said to be an object for the exercise of mercy. Justification and pardon have nothing in common with each other ; accordingly, in the Scriptures, these are two distinct views of the same act of divine goodness—two distinct processes of the same exercise of sovereign grace.

The sinner in himself, standing on his own merits, and obnoxious to the rigour of the law, is condemned—even the sentence of his execution is pronounced. In this position he is an object of mercy ; this mercy may be exhibited as a pardon, forgiving all his iniquities—blotting out his transgressions as a cloud, and as a thick cloud his sins (Is. xlv. 22) : or as a ransom, in allusion to the fate of a captive or rebellious subject whose life is about to be taken from him, unless ransomed or bought off by some friendly power, or by a propitiation reconciling the offended sovereign to the guilty rebel ; or as an atonement, in which the punishment to be suffered by the criminal is borne by another party in his behalf.

If, instead of this, we contemplate the disciple as *justified*, we must suppose him innocent, not guilty—innocent even in the sight of a heart-searching God. This can only be imagined by supposing the sinner taken as it were out of himself, and adopted, and substituted in the place of one who is perfectly righteous. Such is the process with the disciple, when in divine judgment he is accounted *one with Christ*—identified with him ; the righteousness of Christ and the merit of Christ being accounted that of his follower. Here justification takes place of condemnation ; as it is said, (Rom. viii. 1,) there is therefore no condemnation to them that are *in Christ Jesus*. In this view, the figures of pardon, atonement, or propitiation, or ransom, are not called for. The disciple is supposed *in Christ* to be tried, and to be found perfect, wanting nothing : not only exempt from guilt, but even having that righteousness which entitles him to the reward of eternal life.

It is evident that both these views exhibit the same action of divine mercy, and the same instrument by which that mercy is exercised.

‘God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.’—Here is the one gift, or act of grace. “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.”—Here is the one instrument, Christ, by which this grace is exercised. “He, Christ, died for our sins, according to the Scriptures.” “He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities.”—Here is one mode in which the *gift* of God’s only begotten Son is represented as operating—one mode in which the reconciliation spoken of is effected. He, Christ, “who knew no sin, became sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God *in him*.”—Here is another mode of illustrating the benefit of the same *gift*, and of explaining the process of the same reconciliation.\*

\* Some further illustration of this exercise of divine mercy may be found in the

The gift of the white stone may correspond with either of these representations:—in the one case being a *token* of pardon; in the other, of acquittal.

*White* appears to be a general figure, in the Apocalypse, for moral perfection or righteousness. Stones, amongst the ancient Hebrews, were employed as weights, as we find from Prov. xi. 1, where the word translated weight, signifies a *stone*. Christ, himself, is repeatedly spoken of as a *stone*, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, &c. It would seem, therefore, that this white stone is but another figure for Christ himself, or his righteousness. The giving of the white stone, is thus a consequence of the giving of the hidden manna; the one being a token of the other; the hidden manna representing the means by which the judgment against the criminal has been satisfied, and the white stone occupying the place of what is technically termed a *satisfaction piece*. So, obtaining the crown of life, Rev. ii. 10, may be viewed as a consequence of participating in the fruit of the tree of life, Rev. ii. 7; the enjoyment of one benefit involving that of the other.

§ 67. ‘And in the stone a *new name* written, which no one knoweth saving he that receiveth it.’—According to the Greek, the reading should be *upon* (ἐν) the stone. The name is not concealed in the stone. It may be imprinted upon the surface; but no one knows or understands the impression, except the recipient. The verb translated *know*, from Εἶδω, signifies, primarily, *to see*. So the name on the surface of the stone, may be plainly written, or inscribed; but no one can *see* it, whose eyes are not opened to a spiritual discernment of it. This *new name* is no doubt the same as that promised *to the conquering*, (τοῖς νικῶντι,) in the address to the angel of the church of Philadelphia, where it is spoken of as the name of the speaker, “my new name.” Applying this to the passage under consideration, we should read, and to him that overcometh, or to the overcoming, I will give a white stone, and *upon* the stone my new name, which no one knows but the recipient. If we suppose the stone to be a token of justification under the figure of a *sealed weight*, the name upon the stone may be considered the name of him who vouches for the correctness and sufficiency of the weight; and, consequently, it is the name which gives to the

form of petition prescribed, Matt. vi. 9: Forgive us our debts, or trespasses, as we forgive those indebted, or who have trespassed against us. We do not forgive where the party indebted is able to pay, or where the trespasser is able to compensate—we forgive only where the debtor is unable to pay, which is all that we are required to do. So, we are taught to ask the divine forgiveness on the same principle—that is, because we are wholly unable to pay. So, if the debtor or trespasser have a friend able and willing to respond in his behalf, we accept the satisfaction made by the *surety*, and discharge the debtor; and accordingly, in praying God to forgive us *as we forgive* others, we virtually pray him to accept the satisfaction Christ, our surety, has made in our behalf, and to forgive us for his sake.



stone its peculiar importance. So, he who knows the name with which the weight is sealed, or certified, places his confidence accordingly in it. In the same manner, the disciple, recognizing the name of his Saviour in the token of his justification, places his faith and confidence in its sufficiency, while to others who do not know this name, such confidence is altogether incomprehensible. As it is said, Ps. ix. 10, "And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee." Or, we may say, the name upon a stone is the name of the stone. So, as we have supposed this *white stone* to represent Christ, or his righteousness, his name, or a name corresponding thereto, we may expect to find imprinted upon the stone. The name itself will thus show us what it is that the stone represents.

It is predicted of the **BRANCH**, Jeremiah xxiii. 6, "This is his name, whereby he shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**, or rather **JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS** ; and, in speaking of the same branch, (Zech. iii. 8, 9,) mention is made of a stone as a token or evidence of the removal of iniquity,—the stone and the branch being apparently equivalent symbols. It is true that it is also said of Jerusalem, Jer. xxxiii. 16, "She shall be called the Lord our righteousness ;" but this it is evident must be in the same manner as a wife is called by the name of her husband, corresponding with the declaration, Is. liv. 5, "Thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name."

There are other names by which, according to the prophets, Christ is to be called, but perhaps none may be so safely denominated his *new name*, as this, **JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**. Of no other appellation given to the Saviour can it be said, perhaps, so especially, that it is a name known or appreciated only by those, whose enlightened faith enables them to rely upon this name, and upon all that is indicated by it. As it is said, Ps. ix. 10, "And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee ;" and Ps. v. 12, "Let those that love thy name be joyful in thee :—the trusting in this name importing the faith alluded to in the prediction, Is. xlv. 24, "Surely shall one say, In *Jehovah* have I righteousness and strength."\*

\* This construction of the *white stone* supposes, it will be said, the speaker, Christ, to promise the giving of himself to the *overcoming*. Admitting this, the promise finds a parallel in that made in the epistle to the angel of Thyatira, (Rev. ii. 28.) in which the morning star is promised to him that overcometh ; while, at the close of the Apocalypse, we find Jesus himself expressly declaring, that *he* is the bright morning star, (Rev. xxii. 16,) ὁ ἄστὴρ ὁ λαμπρὸς ὁ πρωϊνός.

*Epistle to the Angel of the Church of Thyatira.*

Vs. 18, 19. And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass. I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last (to be) more than the first.

Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Θυατείροις ἐκκλησίας γράψων· τάδε λέγει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἔχων τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ ὡς φλόγα πυρός, καὶ οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ὅμοιοι χαλκολιβάνῳ· οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην καὶ τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὴν διακονίαν καὶ τὴν ὑπομονήν σου, καὶ τὰ ἔργα σου τὰ ἔσχατα πλείονα τῶν πρώτων.

§ 68. ‘These things saith the Son of God.’—Here is wherewith to identify the speaker with the form seen amidst the golden candlesticks,—distinctly pointing out to us the *one like unto the Son of man*, to be, in fact, *the Son of God*. At the same time, the words at the close of the address, ‘He that hath an ear, &c, let him hear what *the Spirit* saith,” show us that what is said by Jesus, the Son of God, is equivalent to what the Spirit saith; the revelation throughout emanating from the same source. The difference in the form of expression is worthy of notice: “The Son of God,” not one *like* unto the Son of God;—in the first instance, under a human form assuming a human character, (Phil. ii. 6, 8,) but now announcing himself to be what he really is, the Son of God, with power, (Rom. i. 3 and 4.)

‘I know thy works, and charity,’ (love,) ‘and faith, and service, and thy patience, and *thy last works to be more than thy first works*.’—Such seems to be the sense of the passage. There is first a general declaration of a knowledge of the works of the system, such as is made to all the angels, and then a particular declaration of what is known in respect to these works. The angel, or system, has even increased in works, or in a zeal for works; and there seems to be a degree of praise bestowed for its love, and faith, and service, and patience. It is not reproached with having forsaken its *first love*, as was the case with the Ephesian angel; neither are we to suppose, on the other hand, that it was *perfect in love*, or that it *excelled* in the other qualities named. It evidently was not entirely wanting in them. It had faith, but this faith was not without its blemish, or its deficiency, as a matter of doctrine. Its *service* would seem to be a part of its works; but the word *διακονίαν* probably refers more particularly to the *ministry* of the angel, or the influence of the system in the work of evangelization. Its patience, *ὑπομένα*, we suppose to be its firmness in the *polemical* contest in which it is engaged, as a system, or messenger of the Gospel. The term *ὑπομένα*, translated patience, from the verb *ὑπομένω*, signifying primarily the sustaining of a hostile attack,—bearing up, as under a shield against the shock of the enemies’ weapons: *sustentatio quæ impetus et incursus alicujus rei sustinetur*, (Suiceri Lex.,) an endurance to the end, spoken of in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark,—the patience, in which the followers of Jesus are directed to possess, or to build

up (edify, *condo*) their souls, or minds, Luke xxi. 19. Here is a great deal of praise implied, while the closing declaration, ‘I know thy last works to be more than the first,’ shows that whatever error the angel, or system, has fallen into, it has not diminished in its activity, or zeal, as to works. It may be, however, that the words *τῶν πρώτων* apply to all the preceding qualities—under either construction, the angel seems to be distinguished *for works*.

V. 20. Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols.

Ἀλλ' ἔχω κατὰ σοῦ, ὅτι ἀφείς τὴν γυναικά σου Ἰεζάβελ, ἣ λέγουσα ἐαυτὴν προφῆτιν καὶ διδάσκει καὶ πλανᾷ τοὺς ἐμους δούλους πορεύσθαι καὶ φαγεῖν εἰδωλόθυστα.

§ 69. ‘Notwithstanding, or but, I have against thee that thou sufferest,’ &c.—The term *ὀλίγα*, rendered a few things, is not in all editions of the Greek. With it, the idea conveyed is, that there may be more than one thing to be complained of—without it, the complaint seems to be confined to this Jezebellian influence. According to the reading of some editions, as above, this Jezebel would seem to be figuratively spoken of as the wife of the angel—*τὴν γυναικά σου*, *thy wife*, or *thy woman*—whether this be correct or not, the allusion must be to the wife of Ahab, King of Israel;—there being something analogous between the influence of this woman over her husband, and the influence of that which is here represented by her over the system of doctrine figuratively addressed as the angel of a church. The word translated *seduce* signifies primarily, to cause to err—to turn from the right way, to pervert (*in errorem impello*.) This Jezebel being suffered, not only to teach the elements of falsehood, but also to carry out her doctrines, in a general perversion of truth.

The term *prophet*, or *prophetess*, was originally applied to those who professed to interpret the things uttered by the oracles, as coming from the gods, (Rob. Lex. 656,) not so much the foreteller of future events, as the interpreter of the foreteller, (ὁ μάντις.) In this sense the term was probably understood by the Greeks and Romans in the times of the apostles, and was thence applied amongst Christians to their religious teachers, as *interpreters* of the sacred writings; and even to the doctrines themselves, as deduced from those writings.\* Accordingly, we suppose this Jezebel to represent a professed interpreter of revealed truth; or rather, a principle of such interpretation—a construction—not of a single individual, but of a sect perhaps, or, as we sometimes say, of a *school*. The construction, however, and not the school of human individuals literally, is represented by this mischievous woman. As the angel represents a system of doctrine, so here is

\* *Apud veteres, προφῆται dicebantur sanorum antistites, oraculorumque interpretes. In Nor. Test. προφητεύειν de eo dicitur qui scripta sacra interpretatur seu enarrat, (Suiceri Lex.)*



a false construction permitted to insinuate itself into the system, and thus to pervert, or lead away, the true principles (my servants) to the formation of false doctrines, or erroneous views. The error in contemplation, had, it seems, the same tendency as that of the doctrine, or school, of Balaam, already noticed—something hostile to an implicit dependence upon Christ, as by a spiritual union with him; idolatrous, also, as in effect serving some other object of worship than God, the only Saviour, (§ 61.)

The action of the spiritual Balaam seems to be less direct, or more insidious than that of Jezebel. He gains his object by throwing a stumbling-block in the way of truth. The disciple is offended, or shocked, at the enunciation of some principle which he does not understand, and falls, in consequence, into an opposite error; or he is captivated by some plausible appearance of religious principle, which in its tendency leads him away from the true means of salvation. Jezebel, on the contrary, assumes to be an interpreter, and in this capacity openly and authoritatively promulgates error, (*ex cathedrâ.*) As a false construction, or system of construction, employed in the interpretation of the word of God, coerces all adopting such construction into the erroneous views resulting from it.

The infamous woman whose name is here typically used, was the daughter of a heathen prince; and by her coming into power, in the kingdom of Israel, the whole body of the people was led into idolatry. She, accordingly, furnishes an appropriate figure of some foreign principle, or mode of construction, pretending to favour a purer worship of the Deity, but in reality tending to rob God of the honour and service peculiarly his. We say *pretending*, for we may take it for granted, that the advocates of idolatry did not introduce their false Gods amongst the Hebrews as false. They pretended, of course, that their idolatry was the only true worship, and as their idolatrous rites favoured the licentious inclinations of the worshippers, these last were easily led to believe what they wished to be true. So the advocates of idolatry, in later times, under pretence of being themselves the upholders of the true worship, persecuted the early Christians—even the apostate Emperor Julian, professing to be a convert from Christianity to Paganism; so, too, the Grecian philosopher, Socrates, was condemned to death as an *infidel*, because he treated the mythology of his day with the contempt it deserved.

Vs. 21, 22. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

Καὶ ἔδωκα αὐτῇ χρόνον ἵνα μετανοήσῃ, καὶ οὐ θέλει μετανοῆσαι ἐκ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς. Ἰδοὺ, βάλλω αὐτὴν εἰς κλίνην, καὶ τοὺς μοιχεύοντας μετ' αὐτῆς εἰς θλίψιν μεγάλην, ἐὰν μὴ μετανοήσωσιν ἐκ τῶν ἔργων αὐτῆς.

§ 70. 'I gave her time to repent, and she is not willing to repent.'—The last verb is in the present tense, in our edition of the Greek, remind-

ing us, if correct, that we are to transport ourselves forward in the reading to the final development of truth—the day of the Lord—when error, having prevailed for a season, is overthrown; corresponding with what is said of the mystery of iniquity, 2 Thess. ii. 7: And she will not change, or she has not changed,—not merely in the time of the apostle, but up to the time contemplated in the revelation. The term *repent*, we have before noticed (§ 44) as signifying a change of mind or views. This error has had space to operate its own change, but it is not in the nature of error to change itself. Such a result must be brought about by some external action upon it.

‘Behold I will cast her into a bed,’ εἰς κλίνην, or upon a bed. This is supposed to be a bed of sickness, (Rob. Lex. 379.) But we find by the Septuagint that the word translated *bed*, sometimes signifies a *bier*; as 2 Sam. iii. 31, “And King David followed after the *bier*, (ὀπίσω τῆς κλίνης,) and they buried Abner in Hebron.” The menace is therefore equal to the threatening of death:—I will cast her upon a bier—I will bring her to the grave;—she has had space to repent; she has not repented, or will not repent; I will now finally destroy her.

‘And them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation.’—This figure of illicit intercourse we have already supposed to represent the opposite of a simple reliance upon the merits of Christ; as adulteration, or mixture, is the opposite of that which is pure, or unmixed, (§ 62.) The false construction represented by Jezebel, is to be entirely destroyed; but the principles influenced by this construction are capable of being reclaimed, and restored to their original and legitimate use,—a change spoken of under the figure of *repentance*: meantime, till this change takes place, these principles will be brought into a state of extreme *compression* (θλίψις), so as to incapacitate them from doing further injury by their perverted action. The false construction, or interpretation, being arrested—Jezebel being destroyed—the elements of truth (my servants) are no more perverted—no more made to participate in the promulgation of idolatrous doctrines. They must now be employed in the cause of truth, in which cause only they are capable of action; or they must be like persons in prison, and even in chains: but they are not cast upon a *bier*, or brought to entire destruction.

‘Except they repent of their deeds.’—Principles being personified as persons, the operations of principles in the promulgation of false views are spoken of as deeds, or works: being in fact the works of principles in matters of doctrine. In their perverted state, they have been operating as persons deprived of their reason, and their restoration to their proper use is accordingly spoken of as a change of mind, μετένοια, or as the change taking place in the intellect of one who, having been deranged, is subsequently restored to his right mind, (§ 44.) This construction of the terms *deeds* and

*doctrines*, is confirmed by comparing together the 6th and 15th verses of this chapter, as also the 22d and 24th. The deeds and doctrine of the Nicolaitans, and the deeds and doctrine of Jezebel, evidently signifying in both cases elements of doctrine, or doctrinal views. So by comparing verse 20 with verse 22, we perceive that what is called *adultery* in one, is termed *fornication* in the other; the terms, for the purpose of illustration, being used as equivalents.

V. 23. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

Καὶ τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς ἀποκτενῶ ἐν θανάτῳ· καὶ γνώσονται πᾶσαι αἱ ἐκκλησίαι, ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ἐρευνῶν νεφροὺς καὶ καρδίας, καὶ δώσω ὑμῖν ἐκάστη κατὰ τὰ ἔργα ὑμῶν.

§ 71. ‘I will destroy her children with death,’ would be, perhaps, a better rendering.—These children we may presume to be, figuratively speaking, illegitimate children, the offspring of the illicit connexion between Jezebel and those denominated “my servants.” In other words, they are the issue of the false construction put upon true principles, or something equivalent thereto—erroneous deductions from these perverted elements of truth, and consequently, like the false construction itself, to be destroyed.

‘Children are an heritage of the Lord.’—So are righteousnesses or merits; those of Christ being the inheritance left by him to his followers. Children are thus figures of merits, or supposed merits; legitimate children being one of the figures of the righteousness, or merits, resulting from a union with Christ. “Happy (Ps. cxxvii. 5) is he who hath his quiver full of them: he shall meet his *adversary* in the gate.” Illegitimate children represent supposed righteousness, pretended merits, causes of shame and reproach. The children of Jezebel we may suppose, accordingly, to be the pretended merits or righteousnesses of human invention, resulting from the erroneous interpretation given to certain doctrines, or elements of revelation. These are said to be destroyed by death; death being, in a spiritual sense, the result of the action of the law upon every work, or principle, subjected to its action, and incapable of meeting all its requirements. The pretensions to merit, or grounds of justification, drawn from the Jezebellian construction, are of this character. They will be manifested to be incapable of meeting the requisitions of the divine command; and consequently, as soon as subjected to this test, they are destroyed with *death*:—*children*, in a spiritual sense, destroyed by *death* in the same sense—pretensions to merits destroyed by legal condemnation.

§ 72. ‘And all the churches shall know that I am he which searches the reins and the heart.’—Here is a manifestation resulting from the operation just described. The Jezebellian construction supposes the production



of certain merits, or righteousnesses, equal to a fulfillment of the requisitions of the law. The law, spiritually discerned, is therefore brought to act with all its power upon them—they are tried and condemned. They are tried by examining into the secret springs of action. The motives whence these works or merits, as they are supposed to be, emanate, are sifted, and are all found to originate from an impure source. There is no love of God in them—not one of them has proceeded from love to him,—they are all selfish, and mercenary, and vain-glorious; or they are amalgamated with principles of this character, contaminating the whole mass. This trial is supposed to be public. The Churches are spoken of as spectators. They discern the process; they notice the nature of the investigation; and hence they perceive that he who has conducted the whole, or rather who presides as judge over the whole, is He who searcheth the reins and the heart:—"The searching,"—the operation continually going on. The idea is thus suggested that this revelation itself may be an instrument of exhibiting the fallacy of all human claims to righteousness, by showing the connection between the works upon which these claims are founded, and the motives whence they originate. The words, *I am he*, at the same time remind us that the speaker,—the Son of God, in form like the Son of man,—the Spirit speaking to the churches, is also the Righteous God spoken of, Ps. vii. 9, "Who trieth the reins and the heart." I, Jesus, who am addressing the angels of the churches, preparatory to unveiling myself, am he who looketh upon the heart, as it is said, John ii. 25, "He needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." I also am He who, in this unveiling of myself, am about to show the real character and motives of the human mind, and to exhibit the fallacy of all human pretensions to merit.

§ 73. 'The reins and the heart.'—The heart is usually taken for the seat of affection, passion, or desire, both in a good and bad sense, in contradistinction to the mind; as if the latter were something which decided coolly and dispassionately, while the former was governed only by a sort of animal impulse. This, however, does not appear to be the use of the figure designed in the Scriptures. The heart and mind are there, perhaps without exception, almost interchangeable terms; at least the former is frequently put for the latter, as a tree may be put for the fruit of the tree—the thoughts of the heart must constitute the mind. The heart seems to be spoken of rather as the fountain of thought, however, and the mind as the reservoir formed from the fountain. The difference appears to be principally this: that the mind is entirely an *immaterial* term; while the heart is a material term, employed as the figure of something immaterial—the heart represents the mind. A physical organ, the functions of which are known, is employed to represent an intellectual organ, whose functions are not so

contemplation requires. As the physical heart is the source whence the blood circulates, so, analogous with this, the metaphysical heart may be taken for the fountain of motives directing the whole current of our thoughts. Out of the heart, it is said, (Matt. xv. 19,) proceed evil thoughts, such as murders, adulteries, &c. If we trace back the evil thoughts originating these crimes, we shall find their source in the love of self, the desire of self-gratification : whether this gratification be attainable in the shape of sensual indulgence, avarice, or self-aggrandizement, the imagination of man's heart is only evil, and that continually ; because the ruling motive of his conduct is *selfishness*—the desire of serving, pleasing, and glorifying *self*.

§ 76. In the animal, the heart performs all its functions solely for and within the body in which it is placed ; the blood going out by the arteries, and returning by the veins, in a routine of its own. So the thoughts and desires of the human mind, emanating as they do from the love of self, go out and return, as we may say, with no other end in view than that of self-gratification. Nor is this confined to matters of the present life. If the *motive* of a man's actions, even in his religious conduct, be to secure his own eternal happiness, such a motive must be as selfish, and as much confined within the routine of self-seeking, as if his views were directed to objects of present gratification ; although there is more wisdom in his choice, his motive of action is equally selfish. The heart of man is deceitful, and desperately wicked (Jer. xvii. 9) ;—and this, not so much in those whose recklessness prompts them to acts of open fraud and violence, for there is not much deceitfulness with them ; but the deceitfulness of the heart is in him who thinks he is serving God, when he is only serving himself—who counts himself acting for the glory of his Creator and Redeemer, when he is only going about to secure his own eternal well-being, and to promote, as he supposes, his own future glory. He may be diligent in prayer and fasting, scrupulous in the observance of every moral obligation, of every rite, and ceremony, and of every holy day ; he may be unremitting in his zeal ; he may be distinguished for the excellence of his doctrinal views ; he may give all his goods to feed the poor ; and yet, if the secret motive of his whole conduct be to secure his own eternal felicity, self-gratification is his object—he has not the *love of God* in him ; and if he thinks it to be otherwise, this is only a further proof that his heart is *deceitful above all things*. *He does not know it*—the difficulty consisting not in the desire of unlawful indulgence, for this he can detect, this he knows to be wrong, and here he is not deceived ; but in his ignorance of the selfishness of his own motives, he is deceived, because he thinks he is serving God, when he is really serving *mammon*. Self-interest enters into all his motives, combines with them, contaminates and adulterates them, and thus renders them all impure and unclean in the sight of Him from whom no secrets are hid ; so the same

selfishness, proceeding from the heart or fountain of motive, like the circulation of the blood, pervades the whole moral system ; and the whole man, in the sight of a heart-searching God, has reason to cry within himself, *Unclean, unclean!*

§ 77. By the same rules of analogy, the *reins*, or kidneys, as some of the inmost organs of the material body, may be, and indeed are, usually considered figures of the most secret thoughts and purposes ; but as the mention of these in Scripture is frequently coupled with that of the heart, it seems more reasonable to suppose the different figures to refer to different objects of the same class, than to view them both as referring precisely to the same thing or things.

The reins are located in the region of the loins, and the two seem to be used occasionally in Scripture, one for the other : as it is said of the Messiah, Is. xi. 5, “ Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.” The Septuagint has the words *τὰς πλευράς*, (the sides,) instead of *reins*. The difference, however, seems to be principally that the reins apply to the internal part, and the *πλευράι*, or sides, to the external part ; the loins comprehending both, and both requiring the same girdle,—as justice, or righteousness, and faithfulness, or fidelity to one’s engagements, are moral qualities involved in each other. The importance of the loins, in the animal structure, is derived from both the external and internal economy.

The loins are scripturally spoken of as the seat of strength ; and the strength of man, in a spiritual sense, is his ability to meet the responsibility of a position under the law—to furnish merits equal to the requisitions of the law. The real strength of the disciple, in this particular, is the righteousness or merits of Christ—Strong *in the Lord* and in the power of *his* might, (Eph. vi. 10, Is. xl. 10) ; the whole community of the redeemed being sustained, in this spiritual sense, by the loins, or sides, of the Almighty Redeemer, (Is. lxvi. 12.)

But there is a pretended strength supposed to be derived from something meritorious in man. The self-righteous disciple considers himself possessed of a strength, in his own loins, and in his own reins, capable of sustaining the burden of his own transgressions of law, and of bringing forth merits of his own to meet its requirements ; and it is not till he is convinced of sin, and his eyes are opened to the deceitfulness of his own heart, that he perceives his reins to be *consumed within him*, (Job xix. 27,) and his loins to be *filled with a loathsome disease*, (Ps. xxxviii. 7.) No sooner are the *motives* of all his actions exposed, than the folly of his pretensions to righteousness, or merit, is equally exhibited—his inability to meet the law is manifested. He that searcheth the reins, is he that investigates the pretensions to this ability : He tries us as silver is tried ; and in



doing so, he necessarily lays affliction (compression) *upon our loins*, Ps. lxvi. 10 and 11. To search the reins is equivalent, therefore, to searching into the soundness of all pretensions to righteousness; as trying, or searching, the heart, is equivalent to searching into the secret motive, the *primum mobile*, of conduct.

§ 78. ‘And I will give unto every one of you according to your works.’—A similar declaration is made by God himself, Jer. xvii, 10: “I, Jehovah, search the heart, I try the reins, even to give to every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.” This is the language of the law, as it was set forth by Moses and the prophets under the old dispensation; as it was commented upon by Jesus, in the sermon on the Mount; and as it is appealed to by Paul, in the introductory portion of his Epistle to the Romans, (Rom. ii. 6–10.) But these churches, in the ordinary acceptance of the term, were not under the law, but under grace. We cannot suppose any individual of the Christian community, in a literal sense, to be capable of abiding this test; for which reason, it is said, 2 Tim. i. 9, of the same God, that “He hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, *not according to our works*, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

We must bear in mind, therefore, that *works*, in the apocalyptic sense, (τὰ ἔργα,) are principles, or elements of doctrine, (§ 70.) These are to undergo the scrutiny in question, and as they are true or false, such will be the manifestation concerning them. This construction appears to be confirmed by the subsequent verse.

Vs. 24, 25. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, (as they speak;) I will put upon you none other burden; but that which ye have already, hold fast till I come.

Ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω, τοῖς λοιποῖς τοῖς ἐν Θυατιρείῳ, ὅσοι οὐκ ἔχουσι τὴν διδασχὴν ταύτην, οἵτινες οὐκ ἔγνωσαν τὰ βάθη τοῦ σατανᾶ, (ὡς λέγουσιν·) οὐ βάλω ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς ἄλλο βάρος· πλὴν ὃ ἔχετε, κρατήσατε ἄχρις οὗ ἂν ἔξω.

§ 79. ‘To you, the rest in Thyatira.’—The conjunction *and* is not in all editions of the Greek. Without it, *the rest in Thyatira* is in apposition to *you*: signifying, not to the rest besides you, but to you, the rest. The angel of this church, or, as we suppose it, the system, is lauded for its doctrines, or principles, with one exception: that of this Jezebellian doctrine, or the influence which this false construction, or interpretation, has upon certain elements of the system. This is implied in the general tenor of the address, and is here confirmed. All the elements of this system not influenced by the Jezebellian error, being subjected to no further constraint; they are only required to hold fast, or to continue as they are.

‘As many as have not this doctrine.’—Here, the subject of animadversion is expressly declared to be one of *doctrine*. The works spoken of

are consequently, works of doctrine, as we have just now supposed ; and these works of doctrine, not members of the church, in a literal sense, are to be treated according to their merits or demerits. Those which have not this doctrine, we suppose to be principles unperturbed by this false interpretation of the false prophetess—"Which have not known the depths of Satan ;"—having the doctrine of Jezebel, and knowing the depths of Satan, being nearly equivalent terms. The depths of Satan we may suppose to be the deceitful errors, tending to place the disciple in the position (abyss) subjecting him to the power of the accuser ;—the doctrine of Jezebel, and these deceitful errors of Satan, both having the tendency alluded to by the Psalmist, when he says : "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing," (Ps. lxxix. 2 ;) or according to the Septuagint, "I sink into the mire of the deep." So Ps. cxxx. 1, 3, "Out of the *depths*, (ἐκ βαθέων) have I cried unto thee, O, Lord : Lord, hear my voice." "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand ?"

Not to have *known* these depths, or these artifices of the legal adversary, is apparently not to have been contaminated by them—not to have been under their influence ; the sense of the word translated *know*, being that gathered from its use as a euphemistic expression, (Rob. Lex. 126, γινώσκω 8.) Principles not affected by these satanic errors, as spoken of, are those which have not known them.

'As they say,' *uti dicunt*, or, as it is said ; or, as it is sometimes said ; referring to this peculiar use of the term *know*. The rendering of the words ὡς λέγουσιν by, "as they *speak*," seems to imply that these depths speak, and that the Thyatirans are praised for their ignorance of what is spoken, which does not seem so consistent with the general tenor of the address.

'I will put upon you none other burden,' &c.—The language reminds us of that of the apostolic epistle to the disciples at Antioch, Acts xv. 28, in reference to the conduct of some teachers, who were for enforcing an observance of circumcision, and the keeping of the law : "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things." So we suppose the burden in this case to be a matter of doctrine ; the burden in each of these cases being that spoken of in the subsequent part of the sentence : "No other burden than these necessary things," to wit, "that ye abstain from," &c.—"No other burden than that which ye have," to wit, "hold fast till I come ;" equivalent to the charge elsewhere—"Be thou faithful unto death ;" or equal to what is sometimes said to be a *patient waiting for Christ*. The verb translated *hold fast*, may signify, however, a wielding of power. In Latin, *imperium obtineo, impero, dominor*, (Suicerus.) Hence it may signify here, continue to use your influence—operate as heretofore ;—not as though the angel were already

perfect, (Phil. iii. 12,) but that, such as he is, he is to continue—occupying the same position—to keep his post, till the period for the perfect development of truth.

VS. 26, 27, 28. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: (and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers :) even as I received of my Father, and I will give him the morning-star. He that hath an ear, &c.

Καὶ ὁ νικῶν καὶ ὁ τηρῶν ἄχρι τέλους τὰ ἔργα μου, δώσω αὐτῷ ἐξουσίαν ἐπὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν· καὶ ποιμανεῖ αὐτοὺς ἐν ῥάβδῳ σιδηρᾷ, ὡς τὰ σκεῖτὰ τὰ κεραμικὰ συντριβεται, ὡς καὶ ἐγὼ εἴληφα παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς μου· καὶ δώσω αὐτῷ τὸν ἄστὲρα τὸν πρωϊνόν.  
Ὁ ἔχων οὖς, κ.τ.λ.

§ 80. He that overcometh, or *the overcoming*, ὁ νικῶν—we suppose to be an *overcoming principle* of faith figuratively spoken of, as a disciple having such faith, (§. 46.)

He that keepeth, or *the keeping* my works—he that keepeth or adhereth to my doctrine. The principle, or the system of faith, in which all the elements of doctrine peculiar to the work of redemption, are perfectly, or faithfully found. This system shall triumph, or shall be manifested to be triumphant. Here we find the term works (ἔργα) especially applied to matters of faith. We can understand it in no other sense.

‘I will give power over the nations.’—No one can suppose each individual disciple of Jesus Christ, however favoured, or however excelling in faith, to have here the promise of a political or ecclesiastical power over the nations of the world; nor can we suppose the term *nations*, as here used, to signify literally political bodies, or assemblages of human beings.

The word translated *nations*, is the same that is rendered *Gentiles*, Rev. xi. 2; the translators of our common version having almost indiscriminately rendered the same Greek word sometimes Gentiles, and sometimes nations. The difference in fact is not material, and would not be worthy of notice, were it not that with the term *Gentiles*, we are accustomed to associate the idea of something opposite to Jews; while with the term *nations*, we lose sight of this association. In the Latin, as in the Greek, the appellation is the same (*gentes*) in both cases; so also in the Spanish and Italian. We must be governed therefore by the context, and not by these two different words, in the ideas we associate with the terms. In this passage we might read, *I will give him power over the Gentiles*, perhaps with as much propriety as we read (Rev. xi. 2) that the outer court of the temple was to be given to the Gentiles.

There is another difference in the ideas we associate with these terms, which is not sanctioned by such difference in the original term, either Greek or Latin. We suppose the word *nations* to be the appellation of a number of different bodies, or collections of persons; while to the term *Gentiles*, we attach only the idea of one common mass of human beings—the aggre-



gate of all persons not Jews or Christians, (Webster.\*) In the first case, *the nations*, as separate and independent political powers, represent corresponding separate and distinct spiritual powers—so many powers of the earth, or, as we suppose, of the system or economy represented by the earth. In the last case, the term Gentiles would be supposed to express the aggregate power of all principles opposed to the Economy of Grace. The result is nearly the same: the *nations*, as a figure, corresponding with the *tribes of the earth*; and the Gentiles, as we ordinarily understand the term, corresponding, as a figure, with the *inhabitants of the earth*: both representing the collected power of earthly, anti-evangelical principles arrayed against the truth, but finally brought into subjection to it.

§ 81. If the nations or Gentiles, whether in the aggregate or as distinct bodies, be considered a figure of something opposite to that which is represented by the Jewish people, then we are to associate with this idea of anti-evangelical, or hostile principles, the peculiar character of uncircumcision in a spiritual sense; elements of self-righteous doctrine being figuratively spoken of as human beings, vainly depending upon their own moral goodness, or upon something meritorious in themselves, as a covering of their guilt, and as a shelter from the wrath to come. Whether we view the nations as *saving powers* of divers earthly systems, or the Gentiles as the *saving power* of the earthly system; they both belong to the same uncircumcised class of self-righteous elements, opposed to that system of grace, by which God alone can have the glory of man's salvation. These all, however, are to be manifested as subordinate, and subject to the overruling, overcoming principle: the principle of salvation through grace (*ὁ κκωρ*) being manifested to predominate over every other; that is, to have power over the Gentiles or nations.

‘And he shall rule them with a rod of iron,’—despotically—an ascendancy admitting of no dispute, either as to right or as to power—something irresistible; as the principle of *sovereign grace* sets aside every other principle. God is a sovereign—He has a right to do as he pleases with his own, and every thing is his; He gives *freely*, and when he does so, the question of merit does not at all come under consideration. The rod of iron, we suppose to be the revealed word, in its proper sense.

§ 82. ‘As the vessel of a potter shall they be broken to shivers.’—Strange language this, if to be applied to human beings, from the mouth of Him who came “not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.” The nations in the sight of the Most High are but as grasshoppers—man is but

\* This lexicographer supposes the term Gentile to be derived from the Latin *gentilis*, civilized. But it is certainly much more easy to trace it directly from the root *gens*, *gentis*, plural *gentes*—nations in general.

a worm. God sendeth forth his Spirit, and the inhabitants of the earth are created, in the order of their generation ; He withdraweth his Spirit, and they return to their dust. Literally, generation after generation of nations has been broken in pieces, since the utterance of this declaration ; but this we do not suppose to be the subject under contemplation.

The figure here employed—the vessels of a potter—reminds us of the illustration given to the prophet, (Jeremiah xviii. 2–4,) “ Arise and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter’s house, and behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter : so he made again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.” And now, says another prophet, (Is. lxiv. 8,) “ O Lord, thou art our Father, we are the clay, and thou our potter : and we are all the work of thy hand.” “ Hath not the potter power over the clay ?” says an apostle, (Rom. ix. 21,) or, as the Most High himself expresses it, (Jer. xviii. 6,) in the passage just now quoted—“ O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter ? Behold, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are ye in my hand.”

The house of Israel, we suppose to be put typically for the Legal Dispensation ; a figure exhibiting what may be called the first experiment of the plan of salvation. Here was the first potter’s vessel : it was marred—it proved to be insufficient—it was destroyed, broken into pieces, as the sovereign Maker had a perfect right to do with it ; while in the economy of grace he makes another in its place, as it seemed good to him. The breaking of these nations into pieces, by the rod of iron, corresponds with the sovereign action of the potter in destroying the first vessel, and making a new one. The legal dispensation is set aside—its elements\* are destroyed, broken in pieces—and this by the irresistible action of the principle of sovereign grace. The marred vessel, intended only for a temporary purpose, is broken to pieces, and a new one is formed. Here there is despotism ; but it is the despotism of divine mercy. There is nothing here inconsistent with the character of Him, who came to seek and to save them that were lost. The enemies of the sinner’s soul, and not the sinner himself, are thus broken into shivers, at least in the apocalyptic sense.

§ 83. ‘ As I have received of my Father.’—This carries us back to the remarkable passage, Ps. ii. 8, 9, “ Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron ; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” Or, as it is expressed in the Septua-

\* That is, the elements of self-righteousness peculiar to the legal system,—the house of Israel, as a figure, in the prophecy, being equivalent to *the nations* of the Apocalypse.—See Romans ii. 28, “ He is not a Jew,” &c.

gint, δώσω σοι ἔθνη τὴν κληρονομίαν σου, καὶ τὴν κατὰσχεσίαν σου τὰ πέρατα τῆς γῆς, ποιμαίνεις\* αὐτοὺς ἐν ῥάβδῳ σιδηρᾷ, ὡς σκεῆτος κεραμέως συντρίψεις αὐτούς:—the word rendered *nations* in the Apocalypse, being the same in the Septuagint as that translated the *heathen* in our version of the Psalms:—the nations, gentiles, or heathen, being understood to be something in contradistinction to the Jews, or to the chosen people of God; and both passages being susceptible of the same spiritual understanding.

The words—even as *I received of my Father*—are supposed to be immediately connected in sense with the latter part of the 26th verse, the intermediate matter being thrown into parenthesis. Whether this be so or not is immaterial, if the construction just given to the passage be correct. We have no occasion for supposing the disciple, still less every disciple, to possess power over the nations in a literal sense; and still less, that he is to exercise this power, by breaking these nations, over whom he is placed, into pieces. We must take the whole passage to refer to the ultimate predominance of a certain principle of evangelical truth, over a multitude of opposing errors. However defective our mode of analysis may be, the result, we think, cannot vary far from the true meaning of the passage.

‘And I will give him the morning-star.’—We find, at the conclusion of the book, Rev. xxii. 16, that Jesus Christ expressly declares himself to be the bright and morning star. The promise of the speaker is thus to give himself to the overcoming principle. The giving of the star, however, may, by a figure of speech, be the giving of the benefit—the general influence of the star; as it is said, apparently in allusion to the same star, the star of day, or day-star, (Mal. iv. 2,) “And to you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.” The disciple, in the exercise of faith, in his heart or mind, perceives the day to dawn and the day-star to arise, in proportion as he is enabled to appropriate this sun or star to himself, as the Lord *his* righteousness.

In the apocalyptic sense, however, we do not suppose it to be the dis-

\* ποιμαίνεις—this rule or sway, as the Greek term implies, is that exercised by a shepherd over his flock. “The Lord is my shepherd,” (Sept. Κύριός ποιμαίνει με) Ps. xxiii. 1. . . . “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. Thy *rod* (ῥάβδος) and thy *staff* they comfort me.” Here the same instrument, (the shepherd’s rod or crook,) spoken of as an object of dismay to the heathen, affords matter of comfort to one in the position of the psalmist. *The valley of the shadow of death* being, as we suppose, the condition of the disciple under the threatening of the law—the overshadowing of Sinai. The *rod and staff* necessary to sustain all passing through this valley, must be the revealed word of God, or the promised way of salvation revealed in that word. This brings us to the knowledge of Jehovah, as the Lord our righteousness—the predominating principle of our faith. This same revealed word, in its proper sense, must be the *rod of iron* breaking in pieces every principle of doctrine, or element of error, opposed to the system of sovereign grace.



ciple himself *directly*, that receives this promise. The overcoming principle of faith, or doctrine, is to be manifested as comprehending a reliance upon the imputed righteousness of Christ. This doctrine of imputation of Christ's merits, is to be manifested as belonging to the predominating principle, or system—the one eventually to be exhibited as identified with the other. So, the doctrine of salvation by grace, through faith, comprehends the principle of the substitution of Christ, in the place of the sinner; and so the imputed identity of the disciple with his master, is comprehended in that power of adoption, by which, in the sight of God, the follower of Jesus is contemplated, or appears as in *the beloved*.

Such is the principle, we may suppose, upon which the Christian's faith is to be formed; and of which it is said, 1 John v. 4, This is the victory that overcometh the world—our faith. The earnest subject of inquiry being this: Do I possess the faith here set forth?—do I depend upon this predominating principle? Not, Am I hereafter to rule over the nations, or am I to break them in pieces as a potter's vessel.

‘He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear,’ &c., (§ 46.)

## CHAPTER III.

*Epistle to the Angel of the Church in Sardis.*

V. 1. And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write: These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Σάρδεσιν ἐκκλησίας γράψον· τάδε λέγει ὁ ἔχων τὰ ἑπτὰ πνεύματα τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἀστέρας· οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα, ὅτι ὄνομα ἔχεις ὅτι ζῆς, καὶ νεκρὸς εἶ.

§ 84. 'He that hath,' &c.—Here the speaker, as having the seven Spirits of God, is identified with him which is, and which was, and which is to come; with the Alpha and Omega, declaring himself to be the *Almighty*, and having the seven stars; also, with the one "like unto the Son of man," (Rev. i. 4-16;) and consequently he is the same who declares himself to be the Son of God, (Rev. ii. 18.) Having, or holding, the seven stars, he appeals to his right of control over the seven angels, or systems; an appeal apparently the more called for, in this address, as its language is almost altogether that of rebuke; while the reference to the seven spirits recalls to our minds, that he is also the source of grace and peace, (§ 8.)

'I know thy works.'—The declaration implies, as we have before supposed, something equivalent to that of the knowledge of a person's character, whether good or bad,—I know thy character—I know the character and tendency of thy whole system;—the works of the angel being the operations of its doctrinal principles. On former occasions something good was known of the works of the angels; here they are known, as it subsequently appears, to be deficient.

'That thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.'—Some editions read τὸ ὄνομα, the name, which seems to be the sense; as if it were said, "I know thy whole character: thou hast the name of living, or of being alive—such is thy reputation—but thou art really dead." The system of faith of this church, we may suppose to be of such a character, as to be in high repute amongst men: but "God seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh upon the outward appearance, while God looketh upon the heart."

The work of God, is to believe on him whom he hath sent, (John vi. 28;) and this belief we may presume to imply confidence and trust. If he, whom God has sent, comes as a Saviour, to believe in him, is to trust in his ability and willingness to save. To believe in him, is to believe all that he

declares of himself. It is placing implicit confidence in him ; as a traveller about to cross a stream will not trust himself upon a bridge, unless he believe in its sufficiency. We may imagine a system of faith, in which there is much appearance of Christian profession, or of adherence to Christ as a teacher or example, but in which there is an entire deficiency of this confidence or trust in him for salvation.

‘That thou livest and art dead.’—“I am the resurrection and the life,” said Jesus ; “he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die,” (John xi. 26.) Here we are told what it is to *live*. On the other hand, it is said by an apostle, Rom. vii. 9, “I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.” Here, again, we learn what it is to be dead. To be under the law, is to be in a state of death ; not to be under the law, is to *live*, or to be in a *position*, or state, of life. To believe in Christ, therefore, in the proper sense of the term, is equivalent to being delivered from this state, or position, of legal death. This kind of faith we may presume to be that in which the angel of the church of Sardis is wanting ; or rather, the system, personified as an angel, is wanting in this work, or tendency, of placing the disciple in such a position in Christ—not under the law, but under grace, (Rom. vi. 14.) The principles of this system, for the most part, have a tendency, probably, to bring the disciple back to his position under the law—dependent upon his own merits, and consequently obnoxious to the sentence of condemnation, (Rob. Lex. 63 ;) while, according to man’s judgment, we may suppose it to have the name or reputation of being the true way of life, or of salvation.

Vs. 2, 3. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

Γίνου γρηγορῶν, καὶ στήρισον τὰ λοιπὰ ἃ ἔμελλον ἀποθανεῖν. οὐ γὰρ εὗρηκά σου τὰ ἔργα πεπληρωμένα ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ μου. Μνημόνευε οὖν πῶς εἰληφας καὶ ἤκουσας, καὶ τήρει καὶ μετανόησον. ἔάν οὖν μὴ γρηγορήσῃς, ἥξω ἐπὶ σέ ὡς κλέπτῃς, καὶ οὐ μὴ γνώῃς ποῖαν ὥραν ἥξω ἐπὶ σέ.

§ 85. ‘Be watchful.’—Rouse from this state of deadness. The verb rendered *watchful*, signifies the opposite of lying down, or sleeping. As it is said, Eph. v. 14, “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” Watchfulness, and rising from the dead, being here equivalent terms.

‘Strengthen’ the remaining things which are about to die, or perish.—Alluding, we suppose, to certain principles, or parts of the system, in danger of perversion, and which need strengthening by farther knowledge of the truth ;—corresponding with the desire expressed by the apostle, Rom. i.



11, "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift to the end ye may be established."

'The things that remain,' &c.—The word *things* is not in the original, but the words τὰ λοιπὰ, (the rest,) in the neuter plural, imply things, not persons; not the disciples that remain and are ready to die, but principles tending to that *position* in matters of faith, already described as a position of death, (§ 71.)

'For I have not found thy works *perfect*'—completed, complete, or fulfilled, as the original purports; in allusion, perhaps, to a full, or just measure: the matter under consideration being, not a moral perfection of character, but a correctness of doctrine, according to the measure, or standard, of Christ—"the perfect man, the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," Eph. iv. 13; with which standard every system of doctrine is to be compared.

'Remember, therefore,' &c.—This is an admonition to go back to first principles; equivalent to that remarked upon in the address to the angel of the Church of Ephesus, (§ 43:)—the holding fast the truth, and the repentance, or *change of mind*, as to that which is false, being particularly with reference to the erroneous views of the system, constituting its *deadness*.

'If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come upon thee as a thief,' &c.—If thou dost not change in respect to this tendency towards the position of being dead, I will come as *a thief*, that is, suddenly, unexpectedly.

The Lord will come to all; to the disciple fully prepared he comes as expected and desired, but to those unprepared he comes as *a thief*, that is, at a moment when least expected. The distinction arises from the nature of the case. The disciple *in Christ* is in a position at all times prepared for his Master's coming; *out of Christ* he is never prepared. So to those who are alive in Christ, *he* cannot come as a thief—they cannot be taken by surprise; while to those who are in the position opposite to this, that is, to those who are dead, (dead in the law,) to such, when he does come, he must come as a thief. This angel, or system, is thus personified as a disciple; its watching, or waking state, being equivalent to that of an enlightened faith, enabling the believer, trusting in the merits of his Saviour, to be at all times ready for his coming: as it is said, 1 Thess. v. 4, "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." It may overtake you; it will overtake you; but will not do so *as a thief*.

Vs. 4, 5, 6. 'Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, &c.

Ἀλλ' ἔχεις ὀλίγα ὀνόματα ἐν Σάρδεσιν, ἃ οὐκ ἐμόλυναν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν· καὶ περιπατήσουσι μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐν λευκοῖς, ὅτι ἄξιοί εἰσιν. Ὁ νικῶν, οὗτος περιβαλεῖται ἐν ἱματίοις λευκοῖς· καὶ οὐ μὴ ἐξαλειφῇ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐκ βιβλίου τοῦ πατρὸς μου καὶ ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀγγέλων αὐτοῦ. Ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα, κ.τ.λ.

§ 86. 'But thou hast a few names,' &c.—Notwithstanding the general deadness of the *Sardisean* system, there are a few principles in it which have not been affected by the perversion calling for this strong animadversion:—the term *names* being put for principles possessing a certain power; as a thing done in the name of a prince, or ruler, is something done by his authority. There is but one name or power whereby we can be saved, but there may be subordinate names, or powers, or principles, entering into the composition of the plan of salvation; as there are opposite names, pretended powers, or false principles, typically spoken of, Zech. xiii. 2, as the names of the idols to be cut off out of the land, in the day when the fountain is opened for sin and uncleanness; that is, in the day when the true means of salvation shall be fully manifested.

'Which have not defiled their garments,'—Garments of salvation—righteousness, or merits, or means of propitiation. The only unspotted garments of this kind are those of the merits of Christ. Principles holding forth means of salvation, partly of Christ's merits, and partly of man's, are represented as disciples wearing spotted or defiled garments, (§ 63;) whereas doctrinal principles, exhibiting the imputed righteousness of Christ, as the only robe or garment of salvation, are personified as disciples depending upon no merits but those of their Saviour. Principles of this character and tendency are said to walk with the speaker; that is, they are to be manifested, in accordance with him; for, as it is implied, Amos iii. 3, Two cannot walk together except they be agreed. They shall walk, too, with him *in white*. Their character and tendency being in conformity with the truth, they shall wear its livery; they shall be manifested as belonging to the system of salvation, by imputed righteousness;—this imputed righteousness being that which is pre-eminently distinguished for its *whiteness*.

'For they are worthy.'—This it is evident could not be said literally of any disciple; there is not one that is worthy of the least of the mercies of God. Still less can there be a human being worthy, in himself, of walking in a splendid array by the side of him who is the first and the last—the Almighty; but a true principle, or true element of doctrine, is worthy of the system of truth to which it belongs. These principles are *worthy*, because they are compatible with the leading, predominating truth; and they are thus compatible

because, in the garments of salvation proffered by them, there is no amalgamation of human merit with divine.

‘He that overcometh shall be clothed,’ &c.—Here the overcoming, and those not having defiled their garments, appear to have the same promise; one to walk with Jesus in white, the other to be clothed, or wrapped about in white;—the word translated *garment* in the first instance, and *raiment* in the last, being the same in the original. The intimation seems to be that the doctrinal principles containing, or inculcating, nothing inconsistent with the truth of salvation by Christ’s righteousness alone, shall overcome; and thus overcoming, they shall be manifested to belong to this great system of truth; clothed or wrapped about with his *imputed* righteousness—a robe white as the light.

§ 87. ‘And I will not blot out his name out of the book of life.’—Not, we may presume, that the name of a disciple, once in the book of life, as an object of divine favour, elect, according to the fore-knowledge of God, (1 Pet. i. 2,) can be afterwards blotted out. Paul speaks of those “whose names are in the book of life,” Phil. iv. 3, apparently as having evidence of their true discipleship, and ultimate salvation; but Paul’s language is not like that of the Apocalypse, professedly the language of vision. He may be speaking of disciples, while the *Spirit*, in this revelation, employs the same figure in speaking of principles. The Apocalyptic book of life we suppose to be the divine plan of redemption, with all the elements of truth belonging to it. Certain doctrinal principles have the name, or reputation, in human estimation, of belonging to this book or plan. Like the angel addressed, they have the name of living; eventually, however, they will be manifested as not belonging to this plan, which manifestation is spoken of as an erasure of their names. So, although the angel, or system, is generally so perverted as to be in a manner dead, yet it is not so dead as to be past recovery, otherwise, the admonition would be useless. It has some true principles, “things which remain,” &c.—unperverted truths, really belonging to God’s plan or book of life—elements of truth destined to be the means of resuscitating the whole system. The manifestation of the correctness of these uncontaminated principles, and the means of strengthening the others, we may suppose to be part of the design of the subsequent revelation, although not expressly so stated.

‘But I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.’—Corresponding with this is the declaration of Jesus, recorded Luke xii. 8, 9, “Also I say unto you, whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God. But he that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the angels.” Whatever construction we may put upon these words, the same distinction is to be observed here as just now noticed. The language in Luke is not, like that



of the Apocalypse, professedly the language of vision. In this revelation accordingly, principles personified are spoken of in the same terms as those employed in reference to disciples in the gospels: this *confession* on the part of the divine speaker being a figurative term for ultimate manifestation; as if we should say, When the truths of salvation are fully and perfectly developed, then will be manifest what principles belong to God's plan or economy of grace, as well as what disciples are the peculiar subjects of his favour;—this final exhibition constituting a virtual, not an oral confession of the fact.

*Epistle to the Angel of the Church in Philadelphia.*

V. 7. And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These things saith he that is holy. he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth.

Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Φιλαδελφείᾳ ἐκκλησίας γράψον· τὰδε λέγει ὁ ἅγιος, ὁ ἀληθινός, ὁ ἔχων τὴν κλεῖν τοῦ Δαυὶδ, ὁ ἀνοίγων καὶ οὐδεὶς κλείει, καὶ κλείει καὶ οὐδεὶς ἀνοίγει·

§ 88. 'He that is holy'—ὁ ἅγιος—*The set apart*, as the Greek term strictly signifies. An appellation of office, or position, rather than of quality. The Greek word ὅσιος, also rendered *holy* in our common version, seems to be expressive of quality only; as, Rev. xv. 4, where God is spoken of as the only *holy* being. The word ἅγιος, on the contrary, with its derivatives, is applied to a great variety of objects—as in the appellation *saints*, or holy ones, given to those who are in themselves sinners, and who are only clean, or holy, or saints, as being *set apart* in Christ. So the verb ἁγιάζω, rendered sometimes *sanctify*, and sometimes *hallow*, is applied (Matt. xxiii. 19) to the gift, or offering, upon the altar, sanctified or made holy by its position, and not by any change in its nature. The noun ἁγιασμός, holiness, or sanctification, in like manner must express a character of *position*, not of intrinsic quality:—the sanctification of the disciple consisting in his being *set apart* by adoption in Christ; when otherwise, out of Christ, he would be unholy.

Jesus Christ was especially *set apart* to the work of redemption, in reference to which we may suppose he here styles himself ὁ ἅγιος, the holy. He is the holy in quality also, as God manifest in Christ; but this is not what is under contemplation in this place. In like manner, when the Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost is spoken of, τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιος, we are not to suppose the existence or action of two spirits of God—one holy in quality, and the other not holy; but the *Holy Spirit* seems to be the appellation of that peculiar agency of Almighty power, which is *set apart* to the work of redemption—that exercise of the power of God, by which all things are made to redound to his glory. The holiness of this Spirit is an appellation of office. The Spirit of God in the beginning moved upon the face of the waters, Gen. i. 2,—He divideth the sea by his power, and by his *Spirit* he hath garnished

the heavens, (Job xxvi. 12, 13;) but these operations are not peculiarly those of the *Holy Spirit*.

The Spirit of God hath made us, and the inspiration of the Almighty gives us understanding; but the operation of divine power, causing all things to work together for our eternal redemption, is peculiarly to be contemplated as the spirit *set apart*—the *Holy Spirit*. So, when the speaker in this passage of the Apocalypse styles himself *the Holy*, we may suppose it to be equivalent to a declaration that he is the *Holy Spirit*—the *Comforter*, ὁ παρακλητικός, whose coming is promised, John xiv. 26, and who is now about to discharge the function there ascribed to him: that of teaching the disciples of Christ, and bringing all things to their remembrance. Keeping this idea in view, we perceive a peculiar propriety and force in the declaration, “These things saith *the Holy*;” the spirit set apart to testify of Christ, as declared, John xv. 26; the spirit of truth exhibited on the day of Pentecost, under the appearance of cloven tongues; and speaking in the present revelation the two-fold language of a mystic vision—the two-edged sword from the mouth of divine wisdom, (Rev. i. 16.)

‘He that is true.’—As the appellation “he that is holy,” seems to apply to the Holy Spirit, so *He that is true*, probably applies to the first person of the Trinity, manifested in the second, corresponding with what is said of the identity of the Father and Son, 1. John v. 20—“And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him *that is true*, and we are in him *that is true*; (even) in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.”

§ 89. ‘He that hath the key of David,’ &c.—The use of this *key* we have already alluded to, (§ 37,) in treating of the keys of Death and Hell, viz., that it is the instrument or means of unlocking or revealing certain mysteries. We suppose the key here mentioned, to be the same as that referred to by the prophet, (Is. xxii. 22,) speaking of Christ apparently under the figurative appellation of Eliakim, (the God of the resurrection)—“And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder: so he shall open and *none* shall shut, and he shall shut and *none* shall open.” A key is said to be sometimes a symbol of power and authority; but here, if not elsewhere, it appears to represent the means of unlocking or developing certain mysteries, or mystic predictions. As the key of knowledge, Luke xi. 52, we may presume to be what may be called a *clue* to the understanding and proper interpretation of the Scriptures.—“Wo unto you, lawyers, for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye enter not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.” An intimation that those professing to discharge the function of expounding the Scriptures of the Old Testament, had been in possession of some peculiar key, of the use of which they had deprived those whom it was their duty to instruct:

no doubt judging that the proper use of such means of interpretation, would militate with their substitution of the traditions of men for the commandments of God.

The key of David, we suppose, accordingly, to be a key to the hidden spiritual meaning of the writings of the royal psalmist. As we have supposed the keys of the kingdom of Heaven (Matt. xvi. 19) to be the appellation of certain means of unlocking or developing the mysteries of the kingdom, so also, we may consider Eliakim's key of the house of David, to be the steward's key of all that is in the house, or the key of the householder, alluded to, Matt. xiii. 52. As the apostles, with the keys of the kingdom of heaven, were stewards of the mysteries of God, (1 Cor. iv. 1,) so Christ is the chief steward of his father's house; but he is especially said to have the *key of David*, because in him the prophetic meaning of the psalms of David is revealed, or opened. As in the application which he himself makes of the remarkable passage, setting forth the divinity of the Messiah—"The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool."

The book of Psalms has, throughout, a prophetic allusion to the mysteries of salvation, the power of the law, the helplessness of the sinner, and the infallibility of the gracious remedy provided. In addition to which, Christ may be said to have the key of David, as the king of Israel was himself, in certain important particulars, the type of him that was to come: the history of the spiritual King of Israel, thus serving as a key for unlocking the mysteries represented in the history of the literal king.

§ 90. 'He that shutteth, (locketh,) and no man openeth, or unlocketh,' &c.; that is, it is in Christ, and in him only, that the mysteries of David are developed. No other possesses the *key*, for there is no other key than himself; and what he has seen fit to develope, no human power can conceal. At the same time, we are not to expect that this development has already taken place to its full extent. As Jesus said to his disciples while he was with them, (John xvi. 12,) "I have many things to say, but ye cannot bear them now." So the mysterious, the wonderful truths of God's economy of redemption, have been and still continue to be developed to men, only as they are able to hear it, (Mark iv. 33.)

In this verse the speaker appears to reveal himself in his *triune* character, as the true God, and as Him of whom David in the psalms, and the prophets have spoken; in which respect the angel of this church may be said to be particularly favoured;—a peculiarity which may have some connection with what appears to be the comparatively unexceptionable character of this system.

The name of the city, signifying *brotherly love*, may also be intended to indicate some of the good features of the system: as it is said, 1 John iii.



14,—“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren;” and same Epistle, ii. 10, “He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.” His conduct or character affords no occasion for taking offence at his profession, καὶ σκάνδαλον ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν.

V. 8. I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα· ἰδοὺ, δέδωκα ἐνώπιόν σου θύραν ἀνεῳγμένην, ἣν οὐδὲς δύναται κλῆσαι αὐτήν· ὅτι μικρὸν ἔχεις δύναμιν, καὶ ἐτήρησάς μου τὸν λόγον καὶ οὐκ ἠρνήσω τὸ ὄνομά μου.

‘I have set before thee an *opened* door’—a door which has been locked, but is now unlocked—in allusion to the use of a key, as mentioned in remarking upon the previous verse; the door being put for a certain revelation, or means of revelation, by which the views of the angel may be further enlightened, or confirmed. As if we were to suppose the psalms of David to have been *locked*,—their meaning not being understood previously to the coming of Christ,—but subsequently *unlocked*, by the revelation made of him in the New Testament. This development of their true meaning, by the coming of Christ, showing the allusions they contain to his doctrines, his sufferings, and his works, is, virtually, an *opened* door—a means of access to the mysteries of Christian faith; as the preaching of Paul and Barnabas is said, Acts xiv. 27, to have been an opening of the door of faith to the Gentiles—the door representing not the truth itself, but the medium through which the knowledge of the truth is to be obtained.

‘And no one can lock it.’—The coming of Christ with its attendant revelation having once furnished the means of developing the meaning of the psalms, or of the prophets, no one can prevent this development. Previous to this, the key of knowledge might be taken away, and access to the truth might have been prevented; but now the door is opened, and it is for those that desire it to make use of the privilege afforded them.

‘For thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.’—On the principle laid down, Matt. xiii. 12, “Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance.” This angel has a little strength, therefore the means of acquiring more is given him. “The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened,” (Matt. xiii. 33.) So, where there is a certain degree of knowledge of the truths of salvation, more will be added; provided the *revealed* word be adhered to, as a rule of faith, and the name of Jesus as a banner;—the denial of his name being equivalent to the admission (into a system) of principles tending to deprive him of the glory and honour resulting from the work of redemption. With respect to this *keeping of the word*, and regard to the name of the Saviour; a little leaven of

truth, we may say, will leaven the whole lump. The accumulation of knowledge, from strength to strength, will be all on the side of truth; but without this qualification, where the revealed word of God is not the standard by which every principle is tested; and where the *name* of Jesus, as the only name, or power, whereby we can be saved, is lost sight of, or virtually denied the glory due to it; there, a little leaven of error, or of self-righteousness will also leaven the whole lump, until the whole system of faith is entirely perverted.

We may further add, that it is only to those who are sufficiently enlightened, established, and settled, that it is safe to commit further light; as it is said, Luke xvi. 11 and 12, "If ye be unfaithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to you the true riches;" and if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who will give you that which is your own? If when you believe yourselves about to be called to account, as depending upon your own merits, you are careless and unfaithful; how can you be trusted with the knowledge that your dependence is upon the merits of a Saviour, freely given you? If you are reckless under all the terrors of the law, how can you be trusted with the knowledge of your position by *grace*?

V. 9. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

Ἰδοὺ, δίδωμι ἐκ τῆς συναγωγῆς τοῦ σατανᾶ τῶν λεγόντων ἑαυτοὺς Ἰουδαίους εἶναι, καὶ οὐκ εἶσιν, ἀλλὰ ψεύδονται· ἰδοὺ, ποιήσω αὐτοὺς, ἵνα ἤξωσι καὶ προσκυνήσωσιν ἐνώπιον τῶν ποδῶν σου καὶ γνῶσιν, ὅτι ἐγὼ ἠγάπησά σε.

§ 92. Here we are surprised by the declaration that certain persons (bearing the name of a people expressly forbidden to worship any other being than God) shall be made, even by him who has given them this injunction, to prostrate themselves at the feet of the angel of a Church, and this in the same vision in which the apostle is charged by an angel of God to worship only the Most High, and in a vision in which the sin of idolatry is particularly, and repeatedly, held forth as one of the most reprehensible character.

We cannot get over this difficulty otherwise than by supposing, as we have done, the angel of a church to represent a system of doctrines, or the spirit, or tendency, of such a system. As we might say in the present instance, that a doctrinal system, the spirit or tendency of which is that of brotherly love, (Philadelphia,) is peculiarly an object of divine favour, to which erroneous principles or elements of doctrine of an opposite character must be made to succumb.

We have already described the principles supposed to be represented by these members of the synagogue of Satan, falsely professing themselves to be of the circumcision; and have already shown what is to be under-

stood by a Jew, in the spiritual sense, (§§ 51–53.) We suppose these Satanic elements of doctrine to be particularly opposed to the system figured by this angel, because Satan himself is expressly denominated (Rev. xii. 10) the *accuser of the brethren*; which is certainly a character opposite to that of a system peculiarly designated as one of *brotherly love*. The contrast, at the same time, reminds us that this *brotherly love* is something more than a mere kind regard, or attention to the temporal welfare of others. As the accuser of the brethren aims at the legal condemnation of the brethren at the bar of divine justice, so the opposite system of brotherly love aims at the justification, or propitiation, of the brethren at the same bar; a manifestation of the subjection of the elements of the Satanic synagogue to the system, or angel of the Philadelphian church, being equivalent to an exhibition of the ascendancy of the principle of propitiation, over every element of accusation. These self-styled Jews, who are not Jews inwardly or really, representing doctrines in effect auxiliary to the spirit of accusation.

‘And to know that I have loved thee.’—That is, I have loved *thee*, not them; God’s purpose of mercy being that in which he delights; and a propitiatory system, reconciling his justice with his mercy, being that which he loves. The exhibition of this preference thus coinciding with what is figuratively spoken of as the coerced prostration of members of the synagogue of Satan at the feet of the angel.

Vs. 10, 11. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

“Οτι ἐτήρησας τὸν λόγον τῆς ὑπομονῆς μου, καὶ γὰρ σε τηρήσω ἐκ τῆς ὥρας τοῦ πειρασμοῦ τῆς μελλούσης ἔρχεσθαι ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης ὅλης, πειράσαι τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, Ἐρχομαι ταχύ· κράτει ὃ ἔχεις, ἵνα μὴ δῷς τὸν στέφανόν σου.

§ 93. ‘Because thou hast kept, &c., I also will *keep* thee.’—Here we have another specimen of that play upon words before noticed, (§ 35.) The *keeping* of the word by the angel, in one sense, leading the speaker to advert to the *keeping* of the angel in another sense. This system was said to have a *little* strength; nevertheless, it is an object of favour with Him of whom it was said, Is. xl. 11, “He shall carry the lambs in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young;” a text affording encouragement to those who are yet weak in faith, having made but small advances in their doctrinal views. They are not on this account to be cast off, but, on the contrary, are cherished and nourished with the greater care.

‘The word of my patience.’—This must be the same word as that for the keeping, of which the angel was before praised, (v. 8,) “and hast kept my word,” which we have supposed to signify an adherence to the revealed word as a standard of faith. The term, translated patience,



implies an endurance of suffering, and the Greek term *λόγος* may also be rendered doctrine. The word or doctrine of Christ's endurance of suffering, may thus express all that relates to his suffering for the sins of others. Speaking of a system of faith, therefore, to keep the word of Christ's endurance of suffering is equivalent to an adherence to what is commonly called the *doctrine of the atonement*—the word of vicarious propitiation. The advance made by this angel in matters of faith was small: but it held to the revealed word as a standard, and especially to the portion of it setting forth the sufferings of the Redeemer as an atonement for the sins of the disciple. On this account the angel or the system of faith will be kept, or preserved in the season of trial in contemplation. This, perhaps, must be virtually the case. As with the disciple, whose views of the plan of salvation are imperfect, he is yet far from knowing the length, and the breadth, and the depth, of the love of Christ; but he is steadfast in his belief that the sufferings and death of Christ are the efficient means of his salvation. On this doctrine he relies, and with this reliance he is supported, when tried by a contemplation of the terrors of the law, and of an approaching judgment. So a system of faith, deficient in many respects, may be said to be preserved by the soundness of its views in this particular.

§ 94. 'The hour of temptation,' or more properly, the hour of *trial*, which is to come on all the world, to try the *dwellers* upon the earth. Literally, the hour of death is such a season of trial; it comes proverbially upon every one, and the faith and hopes of every human being are tried by it, either in anticipation, or at the moment of its arrival. We suppose, however, the trial in view here, to be one of doctrinal systems and principles; as we suppose the earth to be a figurative expression for some general basis of such systems. The *world*, an order of things, in a spiritual sense, corresponding with this basis, and the *dwellers upon the earth*, (elsewhere styled the kindreds or tribes of the earth, and the inhabitants of the earth,) principles and doctrinal elements peculiar to such an order of things, or such an arrangement or economy.

There are three different Greek words rendered *world* in our common version, *αἰών*, *κόσμος*, and *οἰκουμένη*; the two last appear to be in some cases interchangeable terms: as, by comparing Matt. iv. 8 with Luke iv. 5, and Matt. xxiv. 14 with Mark xiv. 9, we find the *κόσμος* of one evangelist to be the *οἰκουμένη* of another.

The term *οἰκουμένη* is not met with in any of the other writings of John, and it is used but in two other places of the Apocalypse, viz., Rev. xii. 9, where the old serpent is said to deceive the whole world; and xvi. 14, where the unclean spirits, like frogs, go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to battle. In reference to a matter

of taxation, (Luke ii. 1,) and to a certain dearth, which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar, (Acts xi. 28,) and in the oration of Tertullus, Acts xxiv. 5, the signification of the term appears to be confined to the Roman empire. In Acts xix. 27, it is applied to the heathen world generally, as worshippers of the great goddess Diana; while, on the other hand, Rom. x. 18, it is applied to the people of Israel, wherever they may have been in the times of the prophets; but in Acts xvii. 31, it has evidently a universal signification, "Because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the *world* in righteousness." So Heb. i. 6, "When he bringeth his first begotten into the *world*, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him;" and ii. 5, For unto the angels hath he not put into subjection the *world to come*; this last being apparently an opposite of the *world*, or order of things, that now is; as the Jerusalem from above, Gal. iv. 25, is an opposite of the Jerusalem in bondage under the Roman power.

The term *κόσμος* occurs but three times in the Apocalypse—twice where the foundations of the world are spoken of in reference to a certain epoch, Rev. xiii. 8 and xvii. 8; in which the use of the word corresponds with that of *οἰκουμένη*, Heb. i. 6; and once Rev. xi. 15, where the kingdoms of the *world* are said to become the kingdoms of our Lord. The term *αἰών* is employed in this book of Revelation only in the plural, expressive of eternal duration; and probably where it is elsewhere used, it is rather applicable to the period of an order of things, than to the order of things itself: as, *τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων*. "The ends of the world," 1 Cor. x. 11, is supposed to express the point of time when the old dispensation ends, and the new dispensation commences, (Rob. Lex. 17,) or, perhaps, simply the point where the legal and gospel economies meet each other.

§ 95. The expression, *all the world*, amongst the Greeks, may have commonly signified, every body, every one; corresponding with the use of the words *tout le monde* amongst the French at the present day. But as a figure, we may suppose the Roman empire to be an opposite of the kingdom of Judea, and the term *world*, in allusion to this figure, to be put for an order of things the opposite of that economy of grace, supposed to be represented by the spiritual Jerusalem; and a perverted view of which may be symbolized by Jerusalem, or Judea, in her state of subjection to the Roman power. The trial, accordingly, which is to come upon "all the world," in this apocalyptic sense, is a trial of the principles, doctrines, and elements of doctrine, belonging to this worldly economy, or arrangement, (of legal and self-righteous principles,) represented by the Roman world or empire;—an order of things, or principles, involving the supposition of man's dependence upon his own merits, of his continuance under the law, and of his ability to fulfil the law for himself; while the trial, or test to be administered, with its results, corresponds with the apostolic predictions, 1 Cor. iii. 13–15, and of 2 Peter iii. 10.

We may notice in addition, that by the tenor of the verse under consideration, the dwellers upon the earth, and all the world, are nearly equivalent terms; and, as we shall find hereafter, these dwellers, or inhabitants of the earth, are the peculiar subjects of the woes and plagues, denounced and depicted in the subsequent portion of this revelation.

‘Behold, I come quickly,’ or suddenly.—This coming, and the hour of trial adverted to, we suppose to be in effect the same thing—an exhibition of Christ in his true character, operating the trial of all human pretensions to merit, trying them as silver is tried; that is, by a certain test resulting in the exposure of all false means of salvation.

‘Hold fast that which thou hast.’—Continue, in contending for the truth, to wield those elements of faith, for which thou art distinguished; to wit, an adherence to the name of Christ, to the doctrine of his suffering, and to his revealed word, as a standard of belief, (§ 91.)

‘Let no one take thy crown.’—That is, the crown allotted thee; the crown, not of thine own righteousness, but that of the righteousness of Christ, such as is declared to be laid up for all who love his appearing, (2 Tim. iv. 8.) This crown (*στέφανος*) being of the kind granted to victors at the games, as distinguished from the diadem or symbol of sovereignty, (§ 55.) To the angel of the church in Smyrna, it was said, Be thou faithful unto death, and *I will give thee the crown of life*.—Here, the angel is supposed apparently to be *in possession* of the same crown—perhaps virtually so, in the peculiar attainments of faith pointed out. The crown, as we suppose, not being the reward itself, but the evidence of the claim to reward: as in the case of a condemned criminal to whom a pardon has been promised, on condition of his success in a certain gladiatorial combat—he comes off victorious—the judges allot to him the crown, or garland, as the token of his success;—this token is to him the crown of life, with which he appeals to his sovereign for the promised remission of his punishment. So we may suppose the angel (system) of this church, in the contest of faith, to obtain a knowledge of, and a firm belief in, the atonement of his Saviour. This is his crown of life, which he is exhorted not to part with, and to which he is to appeal, in the great day of account, for the blotting out of all his transgressions, or as respects a system of faith something analogous to this.

Vs. 12, 13. Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, (which is) new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and (I will write upon him) my new name. He that hath an ear, &c.

‘Ο νικῶν, ποιήσω αὐτὸν στύλον ἐν τῷ ναῷ τοῦ θεοῦ μου, καὶ ἔξω οὐ μὴ ἐξέλθῃ· ἐτι καὶ γράψω ἐπ’ αὐτὸν τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ μου καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τῆς πόλεως τοῦ θεοῦ μου, τῆς καινῆς Ἱερουσαλὴμ, ἡ καταβαίνουσα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ μου, καὶ τὸ ὄνομά μου τὸ καινόν. ‘Ο ἔχων οὖς, κ.τ.λ.

§ 96. ‘Him that,’ &c.—The words in brackets are supplied in our common version rather officiously and unnecessarily,—the reading being better



without them. ‘The overcoming I will make a pillar in the temple of my God, and out he or it shall no more go, and I will write upon it, (that is, upon the pillar,) the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God,—of the new Jerusalem,—the coming down out of heaven from my God, and my new name.’

The overcoming principle of faith, as we have supposed it to be, is represented as something of which a pillar may be made, in a temple—not a worshipper in the temple, but one of the columns, or supports of the edifice—something which, being once fixed in its place, is to be no more removed;—something, also, upon which the name or names of what is most important in the character of the edifice are fixed; the edifice itself, being one appropriated peculiarly to the offering of sacrifices.

It is said of James, Peter and John, (Gal. ii. 9,) that they seemed to be *pillars*—that is, they seemed to be authorities;—their opinions were taken as good authority. As in civil matters, we speak of the opinions or decisions of those high in office;—so we say of a sound doctrine, in spiritual matters, that it is a pillar, or unquestionable authority. Accordingly the word *σύλος*, rendered pillar, (1 Tim. iii. 15,) is supposed to signify a most important doctrine, (Rob. Lex. 709;) although, in this passage, the term is evidently used in apposition to that rendered church, (*ἐκκλησία*), which is also put in apposition to the house of God, elsewhere, said to express “the whole body of the worshippers of God,” Rob. Lex. 496. But we can hardly suppose this body of worshippers to be spoken of as the support and basis of the truth. We are more inclined to believe, even in this passage of the Epistle to Timothy, that the house, or temple, of God, the church of the living God, and the pillar and ground of the truth, are but different expressions of the same doctrine, or system of doctrine;—the house of God being put, not for the worshippers, but for that in which they worship; and the term *church*, not for the human beings collected together, but for that which constitutes them a “Church of the living God.” That is the doctrinal system, or arrangement of principles, corresponding with the new covenant denominated by Paul, (Gal. iv. 26,) “the mother of us all.” As we sometimes speak of the platform of a church; with this difference, however, that “the church of the living God” is God’s platform of doctrine, and not man’s. So the Apostle, immediately after having used the terms, “the house of God,” “the church of the living God,” and “the pillar and ground of the truth,” as equivalents, appears to apply to that which it signified by these three terms, the further appellation of “the mystery of godliness”—*τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας μυστήριον*—the mystery of *right veneration*—a mystery, showing the way in which only God can be truly worshipped; something involving, as it appears, the whole doctrine of Christ, as “God manifest

in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

This mystery we may suppose to be *the* pillar and ground of the truth—the authoritative doctrine; and such we may also suppose *the overcoming principle* to be made; and we may say, in Revelation, "He that overcometh shall be made *the* pillar," with as much propriety as it is said in Timothy that the Church is *the* pillar; there being, according to the original, no article, either definite or indefinite, in either of these passages.

§ 97. There are two Greek words, *στήλη* and *στυλος*, rendered in our common version by the term *pillar*. The first is said to be Doric,\* and is found only in the Septuagint, where it seems to be applied to columns, or pillars, as memorials, statues, or images; while the other is applied to pillars as supports, or in an ordinary sense. As *στήλη* is not to be found at all in the New Testament, it seems probable that, in the time of the apostles, the term *στυλος* was used indiscriminately for both these objects, as we use the term *pillar*. Admitting this to be the case, *the pillar* in the house of God, instead of signifying a stay, or support, or foundation, may represent, in the Apocalypse, an instrument of commemoration—something bearing testimony, or witness, or a memorial; the pillar in the house of God corresponding, perhaps, with the ark of the testimony in the literal temple.

Jacob took the stone, upon which his head had rested in the wilderness, and set it up for a pillar; not only as a witness to what might be called his covenant; but he even adds, "And this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house;" or, as it is in the Septuagint, "shall be to me the house of God," *ἔσται μοι οἶκος Θεοῦ*, (Gen. xxviii. 22.)

The people of Israel were forbidden to raise up a pillar, (*στήλη*;) apparently, as an object of trust, a representation of Deity, (Lev. xxvi. 1.)—Absalom reared up a pillar and called it by his own name, 2 Sam. xviii. 18, to perpetuate the remembrance of himself. Solomon erected two pillars of brass in the temple at Jerusalem, to which he gave names—not to sustain the edifice, but apparently to bear testimony to some peculiar attribute of the temple, 1 Kings vii. 15.

So we may suppose *ὁ νικῶν*, *the overcoming*, to be made an everlasting, unceasing memorial of that to which it bears testimony; of which we may judge better by considering the names to be inscribed upon this pillar, or column.

'In the temple of my God.'—We suppose "the temple of my God,"

\* *Στήλη*, Dor. lapis e terra exstans, qui vel munitionis gratiâ, vel in signum erectus. Plerumque accipitur pro cippo, seu columna, quæ in sepulchris statuebatur, aut in qua fœdera inscribebatur, aut alia quæ posteritati mandare cuperent.—(Suiceri Lex.)

in Revelations, and the house or church of the living God, in Timothy, to be so termed in contradistinction to the temples, or houses of all other objects of worship, and as applying to a spiritual temple, in contradistinction to the temple, or house, made with hands, at Jerusalem ; which, even in Solomon's time, was but a type of that arrangement of truth by which, and in which, those that worship the Father, are enabled to worship in spirit and in truth, (John iv. 23,) or in a truly spiritual sense.

§ 98. The worship of God is the service of God, and nothing can be done, strictly speaking, in his service, unless the motive of action be to serve him, (§§ 61, 76.) If a man's motive in performing an act of devotion, as it is commonly called, be to promote his own eternal well-being, he is, in this performance, only serving, or worshipping, himself: his own glory, his own happiness, are the ends which he has in view ; and to his own merit he proposes to ascribe the successful result of his efforts. There may be different modes of exhibiting this service of *self* ; from the long prayers, severe fastings, punctilious observance of days, and rites, and ordinances of the pharisaical devotee of every land, down to the self-immolation of the most unenlightened superstition ; but in all, the character of the error is the same. A peculiarity of the gospel plan of salvation, on the other hand, is, that it not only secures the eternal happiness of the believer, while it gives the glory and praise of that happiness to God, but it likewise places the disciple in such a *position* of faith, that the performance of all his duties necessarily emanates from the pure motive alone, of serving his God—the God of his salvation. Believing himself placed, entirely by an act of sovereign grace, in such a position in Christ as to be dependent solely upon his Redeemer's merits for all that he needs in this life or in the life to come, he feels himself to have no motive of action left, but that of grateful love—a pure, unmixed desire to serve, and please, and glorify his divine benefactor—the only motive by which the blessed in heaven can be actuated throughout eternity. In this position in Christ, the disciple is set apart—sanctified—by being, in a spiritual sense, in the temple, or house of God, as contradistinguished from all other positions or temples. Here, in Christ, all that he does is made an act of worship, not by his doing it, but by the position in which it is done. Christ is pre-eminently *the temple*—the disciple in Christ, is in the temple ; and identified, or accounted, one with Christ, is also himself the temple—corresponding with the saying of the apostle, (1 Cor. iii. 17,) “ The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”

The patriarch, as we have noticed, according to the Septuagint, said, of the stone upon which he had rested, and resting upon which he had enjoyed his beatific vision, and which he set up as a memorial—“ It shall be to me the house of God ;” so Christ, the stone upon which the disciple rests, and which affords him the vision of heavenly communion, is to him the house,



or temple of God. To this stone he looks, as the Israelites of old looked to the temple in offering their petitions to the throne of grace, (2 Chron. vi. 21.) What the stone column is in the temple, the position of the believer in Christ is to the heavenly arrangement by which he is sanctified, or set apart; and as the patriarch, in all his wanderings, called to mind the memorial which he had set up in Bethel, (Gen. xxxi. 13,) the disciple, in every trial of his faith, looks to his position *in Christ*, as affording the assurance that he will conquer, and more than conquer, through him in whom he is able to do all things. So we may say, *ó νικῶν*, the conquering, or overcoming principle, is manifested to be the column in the spiritual temple of God: a column, in *effect*, identic with the temple; the promise corresponding with that of the giving of the white stone, (§§ 66, 67,) and of the gift of the morning star, (§ 83.)

§ 99. ‘And he shall go no more out.’—As the disciple, once in Christ, never afterwards loses this position. The two brazen pillars in Solomon’s temple, Jachin and Booz, were broken in pieces and taken to Babylon at the time of the captivity. Whatever they represented, it must have been something of a transitory character—something like the elements of the legal dispensation—to continue only for a time. But here is a pillar never to be moved. As the glory of this latter house, (Christ,) is to exceed the glory of the former, so the permanency of this position in Christ, or of this principle of identity with him, once manifested, is to continue, not merely for a time, but for *eternity*.

‘And I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God—of the new Jerusalem—the coming down out of heaven from my God, and my new name.’—Here we are reminded of the new name to be written in, or upon, the *white stone*, Rev. ii. 17. Our remarks upon that stone applying, perhaps, even more directly here, (§§ 66, 67.)

Different reasons may be assigned for giving names to certain objects, such as showing proprietorship, or selection; but in placing an inscription upon a pillar, or column, in a public edifice, the usual design is that of making the pillar an instrument of magnifying and giving distinction to that which is put upon it. As edicts and laws were made public in ancient times by affixing them to a column in some public place of resort; and as Absalom erected a pillar, and gave his own name to it, to perpetuate, as he vainly supposed, his own glory; so the distinction given to this pillar in the temple of God is that of constituting it an instrument of proclaiming the glory of God: as it was said to the favoured people of God, Ezek. xxxvi. 22 and 23, “Thus saith the Lord God: I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine own holy name’s sake, which ye have profaned amongst the heathen whither ye went, and I will sanctify my great name.”

On a first reading, we are inclined to suppose three several names to be alluded to here ; but the whole tenor of Scripture teaches us that all glory, honour, and power, are to be ascribed to one name alone ; and that whatever variety there may be in the instruments, by which this great name is held up for our contemplation, the employment of all of them must result in magnifying the one name of the sovereign God, Zech. xiv. 9. The name of my God, the name of the city of my God, and my new name,—must be in effect, therefore, one and the same name. The Supreme Being is called, and calls himself in Scripture, by different names ; the holy city has also different names ; and to the speaker in this revelation, Jesus Christ, several appellations are given, and this even in the same passage, (Is. ix. 6.) If, however, we can find a name applied, or predicted to be applied, in the sacred writings, to all three of these distinguished objects, we may suppose this to be the *new name* to be inscribed upon the pillar.

§ 100. The essential and peculiar name of the Supreme Being is *Jehovah* ; it is rendered in a multitude of places in our common version by the term LORD, in capitals ; and in the Septuagint, by *Κύριος* : (vid. Concord. Trom. Tom. I. 944, יהוה *Jehova, nomen Dei proprium* ; the number of places in which it occurs being so many, that only a few examples are there given : *ex infinitis ferè locis aliquot hîc speciminis ergò enótantur.*) This name was held in so great reverence by the ancient Hebrews, as to have acquired for it the appellation of the ineffable, or unspeakable ; and probably it was not at all expressed by the Jewish translators of the Septuagint, from an apprehension of literally profaning this sacred name amongst the heathen. The compilers of our common version appear to have been governed by the same apprehension, although they have ventured occasionally to introduce it,—as Ps. lxxxiii. 18, “That men may know that thou whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the Most High for evermore.” Many other passages, however, where the title LORD is used in capitals, would strike us much more forcibly, if this proper name were read, as it might be, with the greatest propriety, instead of that substituted for it—as, Is. xlii. 8, “I am JEHOVAH, that is my name ;” and Ps. xv. 5, “JEHOVAH is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup ;” and Ps. lxxi. 16, “I will go in the strength of the Lord JEHOVAH ; I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.” The places in which this combination of the title with the proper name occurs in the Old Testament, rendered in the Septuagint by *Κύριος ζῳσιος*, (Latin, *dominus dominus*—English, Lord God,) are so many, that of these only the chapter and verse are cited in the Concordance of Trommius. We can have no hesitation, therefore, in considering this name as particularly the *revealed name* of the Deity ; that which he has chosen especially to apply to himself, with reference to the whole purport of Revelation.

Let us now compare with this the words of the same sovereign Being, Jeremiah xxiii. 5, 6, “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely : and this is his name whereby he shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS** ;” or, more properly, **JEHOVAH** our righteousness. There can be no question but that this is he of whom it is said, Zech. vi. 12, “Behold the man whose name is the **BRANCH** ; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord ;”—that is, the temple such as we have supposed it to be, in a spiritual sense—that which affords a position for the true worship of God, and a virtual access to the throne of Grace. The Branch predicted to spring from the roots of Jesse, (Is. xi. 1–10,) being the beautiful and glorious Branch, the bearing of whose name alone is sufficient to take away every reproach, (Is. iv. 1, 2.) But it is so generally admitted that this “righteous Branch” is no other than Christ, that further quotation of text to establish this point appears unnecessary ; there can be no question, therefore, but that to Christ also belongs this appellation of *Jehovah*.

We have now to compare with these a passage still more extraordinary, Jer. xxxiii. 15, 16, “In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David, and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely ; and this is the name wherewith *she* shall be called, the **LORD** our righteousness ;” or, according to the Hebrew, as in the preceding case, “*Jehovah* our righteousness.”

Here Judah and Jerusalem are used as nearly convertible terms ; the literal city, Jerusalem, being the capital of the literal kingdom of Judah,—one, the kingdom, comprehending the other,—and one, the capital, being located in, and giving its character to the other : the house of Judah being put for the kingdom of Judea. So, in a spiritual sense, Judæa, *Iordaiia*, signifying the praise of the Lord, (Leusden, O. S.,) and Jerusalem the vision of peace. We may say that the praise of the Lord comprehends the plan of his redeeming mercy, while that plan of mercy (vision of peace) gives its character to his praise ; as his glory comprehends his goodness, and his goodness gives its peculiar character to his glory. In reference to this apparently it is said, Is. lxii. 6, 7, “Ye that make mention of the Lord keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth ;” that is, until he so make the plan of redemption known that its development shall result in his praise. It is then of the plan, or economy, of redemption, under the figure of Judah, or Jerusalem, that the prophet here speaks ; and to this vision of peace is to be given the august name, *Jehovah our*



*righteousness*, not the multitude of human beings commonly called the Church of Christ, but that which constitutes this multitude the Church of Christ, viz., the covenant, or testament of grace, spoken of, Gal. iv. 26, as the opposite of the covenant of works, and, figuratively, as the Jerusalem which is above, which is the mother of us all—the holy, or new Jerusalem,—the Lamb's wife,—of the Apocalypse;—the object seen by John to come down from heaven as a *bride* adorned for her husband, being that of which it is said, Is. liv. 5, “Thy Maker is thine husband, the Lord of hosts (Jehovah of hosts) is his name, and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel.” So, as the wife bears the name of her husband; as the disciple is baptized into, and bears the name of his master; as the people of Judea were said to be called by the name of the Lord; as the seven women (seven churches) spoken of, Is. iv. 1, desire to be called by the name of one man (the Redeemer) to take away their reproach; the spiritual Church, or heavenly Jerusalem, is represented, also, as bearing the name of her Maker and Redeemer, her divine spouse, being with him also called **JEHOVAH OUR *righteousness***. Corresponding with this, a city frequently bears the name of its founder, not to honour the city, but that the founder, or builder, may be honoured by the city, as Ezek. xlviii. 35, “And the name of the city from that day shall be **JEHOVAH THERE**.”

Here, then, we have one name applicable to three several objects, corresponding with that to be inscribed on the pillar, in the spiritual temple: the name of my God, the name of the city of my God, and my new name. The overcoming principle, *ὁ νικῶν*, is to receive the name of *Jehovah our righteousness*, and this with peculiar propriety, as it is by virtue of this name, or of the element of truth involved in it, that the victory is gained, for the acquisition of which, he that overcometh is thus distinguished.

As it is said, Is. xlv. 22–25, “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else;” “Surely, shall one say, In **JEHOVAH** have I righteousness and strength;” “In **JEHOVAH** shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.”

‘He that hath an ear, let him hear,’ &c. (§ 46.)

### *Epistle to the Angel of the Church of the Laodiceans.*

V. 14. And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans (or of the church in Laodicea) write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ ἐκκλησίας γράψον· τὰδε λέγει ὁ ἄμην, ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστὸς καὶ ἀληθινός, ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως τοῦ Θεοῦ.

§ 101. ‘The Amen.’—This appellation is said to signify *the truth*, expressed, as it is here, in the substantive form, (Rob. Lex. 29.) Truth is a peculiar attribute of Jesus Christ, as well as of the Holy Spirit; He was full of

truth, John i. 14; He declared the truth, and he styles himself *the truth*, John xiv. 6; at the same time, he himself gives the name of the *Spirit of truth*, to the promised Comforter, John, xvi. 13. As an adverb, the word expresses *so let it be*: an assent to the divine will, or an expression of that will, equivalent to a declaration of the purpose of God, somewhat corresponding to the introductory language of human edicts, "Be it enacted."

'The faithful and true Witness.'—The faithful witness, identifying the speaker with the Antipas of Rev. ii. 13, as well as with Jesus Christ expressly, Rev. i. 5; and *the true*, identifying him also with the possessor of the key of David, Rev. iii. 7; and, as we have already suggested, with the promised Comforter, the witness, or testifier of Jesus, spoken of, John xv. 26.

'The beginning of the creation of God.'—The originator, the first cause, (Jones Lex. Art. ἡ ἀρχή, p. 287; *Causa, origo*, Suiceri Lex.) Not the first thing created, but the Creator himself, corresponding with the account given of the word, John i. 1–3. So ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος, Rev. xxi. 6, cannot be the first thing and the last thing created, but the cause and design, or end in view, of that which is the subject of consideration: Christ being both the first and the final cause of the economy of redemption; the sinner being brought into existence for the Redeemer, and not the Redeemer for the sinner: as "The man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man," (1 Cor. xi. 9.)

Vs. 15, 16. I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

Οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα, ὅτι οὔτε ψυχρὸς εἶ οὔτε ζεστός. ὄφελον ψυχρὸς ἢς ἢ ζεστός. Οὕτως, ὅτι χλιαρὸς εἶ καὶ οὔτε ψυχρὸς οὔτε ζεστός, μέλλω σε ἐμέσαι ἐκ τοῦ στόματός μου.

§ 102. 'I know,' &c.—This strong language is evidently to be applied to the spirit of a doctrinal system, personified as a disciple of that heartless character, which leaves it doubtful whether he is to be treated as a friend or as a foe. There is a profession of faith in Christ, and, therefore, no actual hostility; at the same time there must be in the system an entire want of the elements of gratitude, essential to that love, or charity, without which *we are nothing*.

'I would that thou wert either cold or hot.'—Not that the coldness, or the enmity, is absolutely desirable, but that it is better to contend with an open and decided foe, than with an insidious adversary, wearing, perhaps, the mask of moderation, professed neutrality, or even friendship; as we might say of one whose negative character, or mode of speaking, is such that, according to the common saying, we never know where to find him: I would that he would show himself to be either one thing or the other.

‘Because thou art lukewarm.’—The Greek term, rendered *lukewarm*, does not occur in any other passage, either of the New Testament, or of the Old, according to the Septuagint; but that which renders this doctrine so extremely loathsome, in divine estimation, appears to be indicated in the subsequent verse. No illustration is necessary to give force to the language used. We may presume the subject of reprehension to possess to an extreme the hatefulness of character ascribed to the Nicolaitan doctrine, (§ 63,) although, perhaps, more specious in appearance.

The verb translated *I will*, μέλλω, is one of those expressing, not so much the disposition to do a thing, as the unavoidable necessity of doing it; a necessity arising from the nature of the case; something that *is to be*, or will be, as an effect follows its cause. The spirit under contemplation from its lukewarmness is so nauseating that it cannot be retained; it must of necessity be repudiated, and that with disgust.

Vs. 17, 18. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

“Οτι λέγεις· ὅτι πλοῖσίός εἰμι καὶ πεπλούτηκα καὶ οὐδενὸς χρείαν ἔχω, καὶ οὐκ οἶδας, ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ ταλαίπωρος καὶ ὁ ἐλεεινὸς καὶ πτωχὸς καὶ τυφλὸς καὶ γυμνός, συμβουλεύω σοι ἀγοράσαι παρ’ ἐμοῦ χρυσίον πεπιρωμένον ἐκ πυρός, ἵνα πλουτίσῃς, καὶ ἱμάτια λευκά, ἵνα περιβύλῃ καὶ μὴ φανερωθῇ ἡ αἰσχύνῃ τῆς γυμνότητός σου, καὶ κολλούριον, ἐγγεῖναι τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς σου, ἵνα βλέπῃς.

§ 103. ‘Because thou sayest,’ &c.—Here is a strong contrast between the erroneous supposition, and the real fact. In a literal sense, it would not be possible for any other than a maniac to fall into a mistake of this kind, to the degree here described. What, however, is impossible in a literal sense, is very possible in a spiritual sense; or rather, the individual labouring under this error in religious matters is, *quoad hoc*, the real maniac, the victim of monomania.

‘I am rich, and have become rich.’—The language of one boasting, not only of actual possessions, but of his own acquisition of them. The possession of what he accounts the reward of his own labours: “I am rich, I have enriched myself.”

Wealth, in a spiritual sense, must be that which furnishes the means of obtaining eternal happiness. “The redemption of the soul is precious,” (Ps. xlix. 8.)—“The ransom of a man’s life is his riches,” (§ 50.)—“Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life,” (Job ii. 4.) For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own *life*, especially his eternal life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his life or soul? Mark viii. 36.

Those who believe themselves to have in their own merits, or righteous-



nesses, or acts of propitiation, the means of securing eternal life ; and who look back to their own works, as the process by which these means have been accumulated, are such as in effect say within themselves, “ I am rich, I have made myself rich.”

‘ And have need of nothing.’—“ I need no other merit, no other righteousness than my own—no other propitiation or atonement, than that which I have made, or can make for myself.—God is just ; I have fulfilled the law, I have done all that he requires of me, I claim eternal life from his justice. If I cannot obtain it by a righteousness of my own, I will not have it. If in some things I have come short of my duty, in others I have more than compensated for these short-comings. I have never injured any one. If I have done wrong, my repentance, or penitence, my sufferings in this life, my reformation, my acts of charity and kindness, my industry, my liberality to certain objects—even my faith, or profession of faith, my zeal for the cause of religion and morality—all these, or some of them at least, have paid the penalty of my transgressions, and purchased the favour of my God.” Such is the language of the self-righteous contemner of the blood of the Covenant. Such the presumptuous delusion peculiar to the doctrinal system in contemplation. Labouring under this mistake, cherishing this error, rolling the sweet morsel under their tongues, the victims of infatuation derive a certain degree of support, in this life, from the spirit of this system, even in view of their last great change ; when they might rather apply to themselves the warning admonition, “ Wo unto you that are rich, for ye have *received* your consolation,” Luke vi. 24.

§ 104. ‘ And knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable,’ or rather, the wretched and the miserable.—The one above all others wretched, &c.—Those thus supposing themselves rich and at ease, being those on this account the poorest and most miserable ; while others most sensible of their own unworthiness and destitution, are the really *rich*.

The error is one of ignorance, however. The deluded subject does not know, or, according to the Greek, does not *see*, perceive, or understand, his real position. His case, corresponding with that of the apostle, who, even while madly persecuting the followers of Jesus, obtained mercy, because he did it ignorantly, in unbelief, 1 Tim. i. 13 ; and because in him an example was to be given of the long-suffering of the Saviour towards others equally misled.

‘ The wretched,’ *ταλαιπώρος*.—The condition of one suffering under extreme hardship, as the term is employed in the Septuagint, Ps. xxxviii. 6, “ I am troubled, (*Εταλαιπώρησα*,) I am bowed down greatly : I go mourning all the day long.” The reason for which was previously given in the 4th verse : “ For mine iniquities are gone over my head : as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me.” So James v. 1, “ Go to now, rich men, weep

and howl *for your miseries*, ἐπὶ ταῖς ταλαιπωρίαις ὑμῶν, that shall come upon you." Your riches—your supposed merits—are corrupted, or prove to be corrupted, and your garments—your supposed garments of salvation—are moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver—your supposed means of redemption—are cankered, and the rust of them shall be witness against you, and shall eat your flesh—your supposed moral perfection—as it were fire. The evident corruptibility of the pretended means of redemption, showing the vanity of these pretensions to moral perfection. The coming misery, or wretchedness, consisting in the manifestation of the real state of destitution, as it is said: There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not, (Eccl. vii. 20.)

'And the miserable,' ὁ ἡλεηρός.—*The one to be pitied*—the real subject of compassion. These terms, *wretched* and *miserable*, appear to be used one for the other; but there is this difference, that one expresses the consequence of the other. The truly wretched being objects of pity, because they are wretched.

'And poor.'—As poverty is the converse of riches, and as being poor is the opposite of being rich, our remarks on the latter condition are perhaps sufficient to illustrate the former. "Blessed are the poor in spirit," it is said, Matt. v. 3, 4; but this, it is plain, was not the poverty of the Laodicean angel. He was wretched, but he did not mourn; and therefore he is rebuked instead of being comforted; so he was poor, but not *in spirit*, and therefore the kingdom of heaven is not to him. He is admonished, however, not for being poor, but for not knowing his poverty. The change to be wrought is a matter of knowledge and understanding. He is to learn that in himself he is poor, and that *in Christ* only he can be rich. So in a system, the element of doctrine to be inculcated is that of the real destitution of the disciple, so far as it depends upon any merit or righteousness of his own.

'And blind.'—Dull of apprehension, not perceiving one's own state. The angel is not reproved for his blindness, but for professing to see while he is blind. As it was said of the Pharisees, John ix. 41, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see, therefore your sin remaineth." The Laodicean angel, or system, appears to resemble the blind guides spoken of, Matt. xxiii. 16—26, who by a species of casuistry, not uncommon in later times, aimed at bringing the law down to a certain standard of their own, enabling them and their followers, as they supposed, to fulfil all its requisitions. The angel here is avowedly a disciple of Christ, professing to know him, but in matters of faith denying him, (Titus i. 16.) "For judgment," said Jesus, (John ix. 39,) "I am come into the world, that they which see not may see," they that see not their need of salvation,

might see it, and "they which see might be made blind," that they who profess to see might be manifested to be blind.

§ 105. "And naked."—It is said of our first parents, Gen. iii. 7, that immediately after eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, their eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked. The eating of the fruit of the tree did not cause their nakedness, but it gave them the knowledge of it. The person who does not know the difference between good and evil, is capable of performing both good and bad actions. An idiot for example may chance to do something right, or something wrong; but he is not considered entitled to reward for the one, or held accountable for the other. Suppose him, however, to be suddenly gifted with a sound mind. From that moment he is responsible for all his actions. He is then in an accountable position. Although the maniac may maliciously take the life of a human being, he is not chargeable with crime, because he does not know the difference between good and evil. Still the murder, as it would otherwise be called, is in itself an evil action, and the bad disposition which caused the murder exists in him, as much as if he had known the legal consequences of his conduct. He is *naked*, although he knows it not.

So we may suppose it to have been with our first parents; the evil disposition, which we call the depravity of nature, existed in them before their tasting of the tree of knowledge. They were "naked," but they knew it not; no sooner, however, did they taste the forbidden fruit than they became convinced of the evil of their own hearts, and of their guilt in the sight of God; while by this knowledge itself they were placed in the position of accountability for every thought, word, and deed; so, it is said, sin was in the world previous to the promulgation of the law, but sin is not imputed where there is no law, (Rom. v. 13;) the law is not the cause of the sinful act, but it gives the character of sinfulness to the act; without the law man is naked, unworthy, and without righteousness, or merit, in the sight of God; but he does not know that he is so, till the knowledge of the law convinces him of sin; of this, however, we have had occasion to treat elsewhere, (§ 48.)

The angel of the Laodicean church, as the representative of a church, or system, cannot be supposed to be in that state of ignorance of good and evil, which exonerated Adam and Eve, while in Paradise. As a disciple of Christ, the angel must represent one converted, one having experienced a conviction of sin under the law:—once convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, and professing to be a follower of Jesus as a Saviour. But we must suppose him (the angel) to have fallen into some error, or delusion, the tendency of which is to represent the Christian as having a righteousness of his own. Whatever may have been his former belief,



he now supposes himself to be clothed, not with the imputed righteousness of his Saviour, but with an intrinsic goodness, or perfection, *imparted* to him—an imparted perfection, making him righteous in himself. His ignorance is not that of one not knowing the distinction between moral good and evil, or that of a heathen community, without any knowledge of law but that which the light of nature and experience affords; nor that of a Jewish assembly, acquainted with the literal purport only of the revealed law. The angel of the Laodicean Church knows the law, we may presume, as it was expounded in the sermon on the mount, and as it is enlarged upon in all the preaching of Christ and his apostles; but what he is ignorant of, is *his own heart*: he does not know himself; he believes that an intrinsic change has taken place in his own nature, by virtue of which he has a merit and righteousness of his own, not before possessed. Rich, and enriched, in merits of his own, he now depends upon these merits for salvation, and is, consequently, as he thinks, in need of nothing.

The tendency of a faith like this, must be to incline the disciple to a belief that his eternal well-being, after all, is wrought out and secured by his own merit:—that there is something in himself causing him to be the object of divine favour; some worthiness, some wisdom, some peculiar piety, some religious observances, some special good conduct of his own, to which he is indebted, or will be indebted even for his eternal well-being. He thus makes himself the author of his own salvation; and in proportion as this is done, the love, gratitude, and praise, due to his Redeemer, is necessarily diminished. Instead of exclaiming within himself, in view of the unmerited favours he has received, “What shall I render unto the Lord for all his mercies?” his gratitude goes no farther than that expressed by the self-righteous Pharisee, (Luke xviii. 11,) “God, I thank thee that I am not as other men.”

As he who believes himself to be forgiven much, loveth much—he who believes himself to be forgiven little, loveth little, Luke vii. 47—he is lukewarm; his system of faith is even worse than that represented by the Nicolaitan; there is more hypocrisy in it, while it loses sight almost altogether of the obligations due to Jehovah himself, as the only author and giver of salvation—a salvation emanating from sovereign grace alone, (Is. xlviii. 11.)

§ 106. ‘I counsel thee,’ &c.—Because thou art under this delusion of believing thyself rich, therefore I counsel thee.

‘To buy of me gold tried in the fire’—pure gold, which has withstood the trial of the divine word; the opposite of the base metal in thy possession, which thou supposest to be gold, and which has not yet been so tried as to have its character manifested;—the *true* means of redemption—the

merits of Christ, who was himself the *truth* ; who gave himself a ransom ; in whom alone that durable wealth, or righteousness, is to be found, which it is for the lovers of wisdom to prefer, Prov. viii. 18.

‘ To buy of me,’—that is, on the terms proclaimed by the prophet, Is. lv. 1, “ Ho ! every one that thirsteth ; come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, *buy* and eat, yea, come, *buy* wine and milk *without money* and without price. Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread ? and your labour for that which satisfieth not ? ” The word rendered *buy*, however, in this passage of Revelation, might, perhaps, be as correctly, and more appropriately, translated *procure*, —“ I counsel thee to procure of me,”—as it is a term coming from a place of public resort for supplies, and does not necessarily involve the idea of giving an equivalent for what is procured ; besides, advice to one just declared to be wretchedly poor, to *purchase* gold, seems hardly admissible even as a figure.

‘ And white raiment.’—Not merely raiment, but *white* raiment. An allusion to the garment of him whose raiment, when he was manifested in glory, was white as the light ; also the white raiment promised to *the overcoming*, in the address to the angel of the Church in Sardis. Not merely a covering, but a glorious covering—a wedding garment, such as will qualify the guest to appear in the presence, and at the supper of his divine Master—not the frail fig-leaf covering of man’s invention, the first effort of human presumption, Gen. iii. 7 ; not the rags of self-righteousness, adding only to the uncleanness of those assuming the filthy attire, (Is. lxiv. 6 ; ) but the perfect raiment of a Saviour’s merits, “ woven from the top throughout ”—a clothing contemplated by the prophet, when he exultingly exclaimed, “ I will greatly rejoice in *JEHOVAH* ; my soul shall be joyful in my God ; for he hath clothed me in the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with a robe of righteousness.”

‘ That thou mayest be clothed,’ &c.—Here it is implied that no robe but this particular *white robe*, can furnish a clothing. The *imputed* righteousness of Christ is the only robe equal to the case, no other raiment is sufficient ; while this is ample, and adapted to the wants of every individual ; corresponding with the provision, of which it is said, he that had much had nothing over, and he that had little had no lack, (Ex. xvi. 18.)

§ 107. ‘ The shame of thy nakedness.’—Thy guilt ; the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and thy own entire unworthiness and inability to wash away or to conceal this guilt. This is thine own—it is innate—it is something in itself unchangeable ; although it may be covered over by the white raiment just spoken of—“ Not that we should be unclothed, but clothed upon,” 2 Cor. v. 4. Although in one sense, or under one figure, Christ is said to have become sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness

of God in him, by substitution; yet really in ourselves we are still *the* guilty, *the* wretched, and *the* truly miserable: depending entirely upon the robe, or covering of divine righteousness, to conceal the iniquity of our transgressions. Not in the sight of man, for it is a small thing to be judged of man's judgment, but in the sight of Him, who, by his arrangement of grace, will look upon us *as in the face of his Anointed*.

'And anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see,'—or rather, "I counsel thee to *procure* of me eye-salve, to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see,"—according to the Tittmann edition of the Greek, καὶ κολλούριον, ἐγγράσει τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς σου, ἵνα βλέπῃς. The virtue of this unction is in the eye-salve, and not in the action of the angel in applying it. The great object to be attained is the possession of the ointment; the effect of which is, to afford a spiritual understanding of all revealed truth; as, 1 John ii. 20 and 27, "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." . . . "The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." The spiritual knowledge here referred to, being that of the disciple's knowing his *position in Christ*, a position securing his safety for time and for eternity. It is, indeed, by our coming to Christ, leaning on him for salvation, and inquiring into his true character, his offices, and our relation to him, or true position in him, that we obtain *sight*, in the sense here contemplated. In this respect, the *eye-salve* so desirable, may perhaps be found in this book of Revelation—a development of truth properly understood—the object of David's petition, (Ps. cxix. 18,) "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

Vs. 19, 20. As many as I love I rebuke and chasten: be zealous, therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Ἐγὼ ὅσους ἐὰν φιλῶ, ἐλέγχω καὶ παιδεύω· ζήλωσον οὖν καὶ μετανόησον. Ἴδού, ἵστηκα ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν καὶ χροῦν· ἐὰν τις ἀκούσῃ τῆς φωνῆς μου καὶ ἀνοίξῃ τὴν θύραν, εἰσελεύσομαι πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ δειπνήσω μετ' αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς μετ' ἐμοῦ.

§ 108. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," Heb. xii. 6.—This angel, however severely reprov'd, is not cast off, neither is the church excommunicated. It is admonished, as a tenderly beloved child may be by its parents—it is still loved. The reproof itself is urged as an evidence of this love; and yet, in the whole account given of the character of this angel, or system, there is nothing lovely in it; but, on the contrary, something even nauseous. We can only account, therefore, for this parental affection of the speaker, on the principle, that his love is a matter of free and sovereign grace;—"Herein is the love of God manifested, that while



we were yet sinners Christ died for us," Rom. v. 8. Herein is love, not that we have loved God, but that he first loved us, (1 John iv. 10-19,) and herein we may say is his love still manifested, that while the deluded disciple is lukewarm in his feelings of gratitude, he is notwithstanding the subject of divine *pity*, forbearance, and even love.

'I rebuke,' &c.—The word rendered *rebuke*, implies the effort to convince one of error—so, that rendered *chasten*, is of the character of the reprimand, or correction given to a youth at school ;—" God so loved the world that he sent his only Son, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved," John iii. 16, 17 ; at the same time it is the office of the promised Comforter to *rebuke*, to reprove, or to convict the world (ἐλέγξει τὸν κόσμον) of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, (John xvi. 8.) Accordingly, in these addresses to the churches, we find this Comforter, the Holy Spirit, discharging these peculiar functions of his office ; the errors of these seven angels being such as we may suppose prevalent throughout the *whole body* of the visible Christian church, and the reproof as general, or as universal, as the occasion for it.

'Be zealous, therefore, and repent,'—or, more strictly, be *fervent*, therefore, and change your views. Be *fervent*, in place of being *lukewarm*. The term rendered zealous, or fervent, coming from a verb signifying to *boil*.

Repentance we have already noticed (§ 44) as a change of mind ; as if it were here said, Change these delusive views or notions of your own riches and self-sufficiency, for a proper sense of your real poverty and destitution—change this opinion of your need of nothing—of your having merits enough of your own—and come to me for the *imputation* of those merits, or of that righteousness which you really need. Such a repentance or change of views, involves, we may say, a change from lukewarmness to fervour ; as a system of faith possessing features tending to undermine the gratitude due to the Redeemer must lose this character, as soon as these peculiar features are exchanged for such as have an opposite tendency. The use of the term *repentance* in this place, affords another proof that its meaning is to be taken in connection with the circumstances of the case. The Laodicean angel is not a pagan, or infidel, or Jew, but a Christian, entertaining certain mistaken views ; this repentance is, therefore, a change in respect to these views.

§ 109. 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.'—This may be considered a general proposition, applicable to the case of all interested in it ; although, on the present occasion, especially applied to the Laodicean angel. It may be an intimation of readiness to grant the supplies just spoken of, and to meet the change of views recommended. As one who has placed himself at the door and knocks, is waiting and even impatient to be admitted, so Christ, the Saviour, by the Holy Spirit, is ever ready to reveal himself,

to make himself known and understood, where there is a door, or avenue of faith, to admit of the revelation. So too in a system of faith, the tendency towards truth will meet with a corresponding development of truth, till the whole is fully revealed.

But we may also consider the declaration, ‘Behold, I stand at the door, and knock,’ as equivalent to the announcement,—*Behold, I am come; I am here.* As it was said on other occasions, “repent, or else I will come,”—“hold fast till I come,” Rev. ii. 5, 16, 25,—“I will come as a thief,”—“Behold, I come quickly,” iii. 3, 11,—it is here said, *Lo, here I am.* The time of manifestation, which had been approaching only, is now declared to have come. Error, as it is exemplified in the character given to this angel, has now reached its maturity: the degree of error being equivalent to the falling away, or apostasy, spoken of 2 Thes. ii. 3, as necessarily taking place before the coming of the day of Christ—the *parousia*, or manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ, as it is termed in the first verse of the same chapter. The nature of the Laodicean falling away corresponding, also, with the effect ascribed to the abounding of iniquity (*ἀνομίας*), Matt. xxiv. 12, on account of which it is said the love of many shall *wax cold*, that is, become *lukewarm*, or cool.\*

‘If any one hear my voice and will open the door.’—To *hear* is to understand—to take what is said in its proper sense and meaning. So the system represented by a disciple thus *hearing*, must be one formed on a spiritual understanding of the language of divine revelation.

§ 110. ‘I will come in to him, and sup with him.’—Supper is said to have been the principal meal with the Hebrews, (Rob. Lex. 136,) something equivalent to dinner with the moderns. To sup with any one, was to take one’s principal meal with him. To eat with any one, according to the ancient notions of hospitality, was to enter into a species of covenant or

\* This abounding of iniquity, we are aware, is usually supposed to consist in an extraordinary increase of immorality throughout the world; while there can be no doubt but that practical immorality has diminished, and continues to diminish, taking mankind as a whole, in the ordinary sense. But we may easily conceive of a falling off amongst Christians, in matters of faith, while the moral state of the whole world, compared with what it was 2000 years since, is very essentially improved.

It is in the church, and not out of the church, that we are to look for this prevalence of *iniquity*, and its consequent lukewarmness: and it is in matters of faith and doctrine, countenanced and sustained by the church, that we are to expect it, and not in matters of moral conduct, which both the opinion of the church and that of the world would discountenance. The iniquity referred to, therefore, Matt. xxiv. 12, we conceive to be a divergence, or going astray from the direct or straight line or rule of truth in matters of Christian faith and doctrine, (deriv. *νόμος* with *ἀ* privative: see Rob. Lex. art. *Νόμος*.) As if it had been said, ‘and because error—the error of self-righteousness especially—shall abound, the love of many (disciples) shall wax cold;’ corresponding with the views we have thrown out, of the operation of this kind of error in the production of lukewarmness, or want of gratitude for the gift of salvation.

pledge; the host binding himself to his guest, and the guest in return being bound to his entertainer; the two parties being thus to a certain degree identified with each other—brought into strict communion. The eating of bread and salt, among some rude nations of Asia, is still considered a pledge of intimate connection, even between parties previously at enmity. Bread and salt being both necessities of life, the eating of these two is put for eating in general, or rather for a dwelling together, as members of one family. We may consider this promise to sup or dine, equivalent to a promise of the like intimate connection, in a spiritual sense, corresponding with the language of the same speaker while manifest in the flesh:—"If any man love me he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him," John xiv. 23.

As to sup with Christ is to be in communion with him, we suppose this communion to consist in partaking by *imputation* of his righteousness, and of his propitiation;—the spiritual bread or body of Christ, and the spiritual cup of blessing, or blood of Christ, alluded to 1 Cor. x. 16, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? for we being many are one bread, and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread,"—the true bread from heaven, the hidden manna, upon which we have already had occasion to remark, (§ 65.) As the believer is thus accounted to participate in the merits of Christ, so we may say, principles of faith are recognized, or manifested to be identified with the teaching and meaning of the Holy Spirit, co-operating and according with that Spirit.

Vs. 21, 22. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am sit down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, &c.

Ὁ νικῶν, δώσω αὐτῷ καθίσαι μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐν τῷ θρόνῳ μου, ὡς ἐγὼ ἐνίκησα καὶ ἐκάθισα μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς μου ἐν τῷ θρόνῳ αὐτοῦ. Ὁ ἔχων οὖς, κ.τ.λ.

§ 111. 'To sit with me in,' or upon, 'my throne,' &c.—This is following out the idea of the communion just alluded to. The disciple participating in the merits of his Redeemer, accounted justified *in Christ*, is accounted also glorified *in Christ*, and in this sense may be said to sit with him on his throne, enjoying a manifestation of his exaltation, or triumph, over the powers of legal condemnation. So if we suppose ὁ νικῶν, the overcoming, to be the doctrinal principle of justification, through the imputed righteousness of Christ, this principle, by being manifested as the overcoming one, will be also manifested to share with Christ in the manifestation of his supremacy. The exaltation of Christ is the manifestation that he is the Saviour, Heb. i. 3, viii. 1, and xii. 2, and the exaltation of *the overcoming* (ὁ νικῶν) is the manifestation that it is the saving principle. As Jehovah says of himself, Is. xliii. 11, "I am the Lord, besides me there is no Saviour;" and, xlv. 22,



“Look unto me and *be ye saved*, all the ends of the earth : for I am God, and there is none else;” and as it is said of Christ, Acts v. 31, “Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour :” so Jesus says of the *saving principle*, that it shall be manifested to rule or reign with him, as he is manifested to rule or reign with his Father, especially as the only Saviour.

§ 112. We may be better able to assign an appellation to this principle, after having gone through with our examination of this book. We have supposed it to be the principle of salvation, by imputed righteousness. If, instead of this, we term it the principle of salvation by sovereign grace, we may consider the two as nearly equivalent terms ; one being necessarily involved in the other. We content ourselves at present with the supposition that *ὁ νικῶν*—the *overcoming*—is a principle upon which the disciple is saved, and not the disciple himself.

The term *ὁ νικῶν*, the *overcoming*, is found nowhere else than in the Apocalypse, except 1 John v. 5 ; and the use of the verb *νικάω*, is peculiar to the writings of John, being found elsewhere only, Luke xi. 22, where there is a physical overcoming alluded to, and Rom. iii. 4, where the contest is of a legal or judicial character, and Rom. xii. 21, where it is used in a moral sense. Jesus Christ says of himself, John xvi. 33, “Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” We cannot suppose any thing in the epistle of John, or in the Apocalypse, to militate with the glory due to Christ, in thus having overcome the world ; and when it is said, 1 John v. 4, “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith,” we must notice that our faith is not said to be the victor, but the victory. Christ has fought the battle—he has overcome the world, and our faith is the result of his successful contest. Our faith and confidence in him as a Saviour, is the result of that which he has done in overcoming the world. So, if the disciple overcome, it must be by some principle of doctrine placing him in the position of the victor, (whereby Christ, and not the disciple, has the glory,)—a glory finally exhibited to be that of God alone.

The Supreme Being declares himself to be the only Saviour. His manifestation of himself in Christ, shows how he is the Saviour. So, free and sovereign grace is the principle which overcomes every obstacle to the salvation of the sinner. The development of the doctrine of justification through the imputed righteousness of Jehovah, by the intervention of Christ shows how this sovereign grace accomplishes its object.

In the Gospel revelation, Christ is first exhibited as the Saviour ; but at last he is manifested as identic with Jehovah, and God appears as the only Saviour, corresponding with his own declaration in the prophets. So, in the development of gospel doctrine, the principle overcoming the powers of legal accusation and condemnation, is represented at first to be that of justification through the merits of Christ, or of his vicarious propitiation ; but, finally, the fundamental principle exhibited is that of *Grace*.

Both of these particulars correspond with the representation of the apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 24 and 25, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power; for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet;" and 28, "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all;" or may be *manifested* to be all in all—it being evident that the fact must always have been the same—God must always have been *all in all*. It is only the manifestation of this fact, which is a thing *to be*.

§ 113. 'He that hath ears to hear,' &c.—Here the addresses to the angels of the seven churches close, with the intimation repeated for the seventh time, of the spiritual or hidden sense, to be sought for in the language employed throughout.

### *Summary of the preceding Introductory Addresses.*

IN these prefatory expostulations, the speaker approaches each of these ministering spirits, or systems, under a different aspect or title. To that of the Ephesian church, he shows himself as the upholder, by the right hand of his righteousness, of the seven stars, or of that which is represented by them; walking too in the midst of the churches as a shepherd, or overseer of the flock, or as a teacher amidst his disciples. To the spirit of the Smyranean church, he speaks as the beginning and ending of the economy of salvation—the dying Saviour, and the risen Lord. To the angel of the church of Pergamos, as the Holy Spirit, the revealer of truth, the sharp sword with two edges. To the angel of the church of Thyatira, as the Son of God with power, whose eyes behold, whose eyelids try the children of men. To the angel of the church of Sardis, as the source of grace and peace, as well as the controller of the seven stars or angels themselves. To the church of Philadelphia, as the Holy One, the truth, the possessor of the key of David, or the interpreter of David; and lastly, to the angel of the church of Laodicea, as the promised testifier, the Comforter, the convincer, the Word, which was at the beginning with God, and was God. Here we perceive a gradual development of divine and sovereign character, especially in all the various relations of the work of redemption; identifying the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in such a manner as to render it impossible to suppose the existence of one, without that of the other.

The several objects addressed, have also their peculiar characteristics. The angel of Ephesus is lauded for labour, patience, perseverance, and opposition to false teachers; at the same time this spirit is rebuked for a falling off from its first love.

The angel of the church of Smyrna receives consideration for works, for peculiar trials, for poverty of spirit, and for contending with certain false doctrines, or teachers, professedly Jews, (in a spiritual sense,) but not really such.

The Pergamean angel is praised for holding the name, and not denying the faith of Christ, while it is reprimanded for having given some license or countenance to two classes of errors, figuratively spoken of as the doctrines of Balaam and of the Nicolaitanes.

The church of Thyatira has praise for works, charity, service, faith, and patience. But, beside a general tendency to legality, there is in the system a perversion of truth, represented as resulting from the influence of the false prophesying or misinterpreting of Jezebel.

In the case of the angel, or system of Sardis, we find not only a contest with error, but a melancholy state resulting from its actual ascendancy—a name to live while dead—a faith bordering upon a mere outward profession.

The angel of the church of Philadelphia does not appear to have actually lapsed into error, but seems to be contending with the same class of errorists as those encroaching upon the system of Smyrna. It is in a militant state, and needs and receives encouraging exhortation.

The Laodicean system, on the contrary, so far from maintaining any contest with erroneous views, seems to have been altogether a victim to their influence; its odious lukewarmness being not a cause, but a consequence of the admission of these fallacies. Still the angel, or that which is represented by the angel, is not cast off, but is spoken of as an object of care and affection. The principal difference in the admonition being in this, that while in the other cases the Lord, or Judge, is said to be *coming*, he is here represented as being even at the door, or already come.

Whether these angels represent successive, or contemporaneous systems, there is, evidently, a gradual increase of the subject of complaint; excepting only, perhaps, the case of the church of Philadelphia. In the last instance, there is certainly an extreme pointed out, and here the impending correction is spoken of as something immediately at hand; corresponding with our general experience, that extremes of error become themselves the instruments of eliciting truth.

There is a like difference in the rewards promised in each of these cases to *the overcoming*, *ὁ νικῶν*; or, as we have it rendered, *him that overcometh*,—or rather, a like difference in the figures employed as illustrations of the character of this, perhaps one and the same reward. To one is promised a participation of the tree of life; to another, the crown of life; to another, the hidden manna, and the white stone, with a new name; to another, a most despotic power over the nations; to another, to be clothed in white, and to be indelibly recorded by name in the book of life, and



confessed before the Father ; to another, to be made a *pillar*, immovable, in the temple of God—a pillar, upon which the name of God, of the Holy City, and of the speaker, is to be written ; (not three names, but as we suppose, one name peculiar to these three objects ;) and to the last, even to *the overcoming* of the Laodicean system, a seat on the throne of him that speaketh, even as he occupies the throne of the Father.

The enjoyment of no one of these rewards is inconsistent with a possession of the rest, and they may all be resolved into equivalent figures of the manifestation of a certain pre-eminence. It is very plain that they are not to be taken in a literal sense, and almost as plain, that they are applicable immediately, to something else than to individual disciples. This something else, as we have intimated, and as we feel constrained to believe, must be a principle, a doctrine of faith, or ruling element of the economy of redemption—an *overcoming principle*, upon which the hope of salvation depends. The design, accordingly, of placing it in this prominent point of view, and of thus magnifying its importance, by such repeated and varied illustrations, is to lead the disciple to search into its true nature and character ; that by understanding precisely the subject held out for his belief, his own mind may be enlightened, his faith confirmed, his hope strengthened, and his love—his gratitude—increased.

Besides the epistles thus addressed to the churches, severally, we find, by recurring to Rev. i. 11 and 19, that the whole vision is designed for their edification and instruction ; and as these seven churches are represented as having each their respective trials, each suffering from some perversion of truth peculiar to its angel, we may presume the instruction to be derived from the whole vision, to call for a setting forth of error on the one hand, and of truth on the other, in such a manner, and by such illustrations as may be best calculated to correct the errors complained of, and to afford the edification required. For this exhibition we are, accordingly, now to prepare ourselves.

THE REVELATION,  
OR  
UNVEILING OF JESUS CHRIST.

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*Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.*





# THE REVELATION, OR UNVEILING OF JESUS CHRIST.

Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

## CHAPTER IV.\*

### THE THRONE IN HEAVEN.

V. 1. After this I looked, and behold, a door (was) opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard, (was) as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.

Μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ θύρα ἡμερωμένη ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, καὶ ἡ φωνὴ ἡ πρώτη, ἣν ἤκουσα ὡς σύλπιγγος λαλούσης μετ' ἐμοῦ, λέγων· ἀνάβητι ὧδε, καὶ δείξω σοι ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα.

§ 114. WE are now about to enter upon the main subject of this development or unveiling. The style of the work is of the dramatic character. The vision is uninterrupted, but there are changes in the exhibition, corresponding in some degree with the changes of acts and scenes in a dramatic representation. The apostle's situation, like that of a spectator in a public theatre, remains the same, whatever shifting there may be of the scenery; and the objects presented for his contemplation continue to be things analogous or parallel to something in real life, but not themselves realities. The exhibitions of this *sacred drama* are all representations of things of the same spiritual character, and of nothing else.

'After this I looked,' or, rather, after these things I saw,—that is, after having seen the exhibition of the Son of man in the midst of the golden candlesticks, and after having received the instruction to commit the seven addresses to writing, the apostle saw what he is about to describe:—the verb translated *looked*, in this place, being the same as that elsewhere rendered, more properly, *saw*;—for we may suppose the several exhibitions to be

\* The ordinary division of this Book of Revelation into chapters, as well as verses, has been preserved for the facility of reference, although otherwise unimportant. The present, although the fourth chapter of the Apocalypse, is but the commencement of the principal subject of the Vision, and might with propriety, be designated as the first chapter of the Second Part.

successively presented to the apostle's mind, without any effort on his part to look one way or the other.

‘I saw, and behold a door opened in heaven.’—Here we may suppose an entire change of scene. The seven golden candlesticks, and the one like unto the Son of Man holding the seven stars in his right hand, are no longer in view : this first act, as we may term it, corresponding with the prologue or action of a chorus, sometimes preceding the principal exhibition ; but a necessary prelude to prepare the spectator for what he is about to contemplate. The whole of this scenery we may suppose to be now passing away ; and instead of it, the apostle sees a *door* opened in heaven—heaven is not yet exhibited to him, but the door, gate, or way of access, is seen.

The patriarch Jacob was favoured with a vision something like this, when “he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven : and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord stood above it,” (Gen. xxviii. 12, 13.) He accordingly denominated the place of this vision the *door*, or gate of heaven. The martyr Stephen saw the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. The Apostle Peter, when first taught that the door of faith was to be opened to the Gentiles, saw heaven opened, Acts x. 11. From all which passages we may gather, that to see heaven opened is to be favoured with an exhibition of the counsels of the Most High, in respect to some peculiar subject of revelation ; and to see a door opened in heaven, is to perceive a means by which one may be admitted to contemplate such an exhibition of the divine purposes.

§ 115. The physical heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work : in them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, Ps. xix. 1–5. Corresponding with this, the spiritual heaven may be denominated that display of the economy of redemption, in which the Sun of righteousness is seen coming forth as a bridegroom, rejoicing as a strong man, his reward with him, and his work before him, (Is. xl. 10, and lxii. 11.)

As in our solar system we see the moon clothed, not with her own light, but with the reflected rays of the sun ; so in the spiritual system we see the church or churches of Christ, or their individual members, shining with a light, or glory, not of their own moral perfection, but with the glory of the *imputed* righteousness of the Son of God. Even in the systems connected with the fixed stars around us, we may suppose the planetary bodies of each to be enlightened by the borrowed light of their respective suns : teaching us not that there are so many suns of righteousness, but that throughout the universe there is the same exercise of divine goodness, exalting the creature to favour by the imputed goodness of the Creator ; the same exercise of SOVEREIGN GRACE being everywhere required. All are

created by the same Supreme Being. In all there must be the same infinite distance between the thing formed and Him that formed it ; all creatures, in the estimation of the Deity, being unworthy in themselves, and without merit of their own : “ Yea, the heavens are unclean in his sight, and he chargeth his angels with folly.” The manner in which this truth is revealed to other worlds may differ, but the truth itself must be everywhere the same.

§ 116. Two meanings may be applied to what we term the spiritual heaven ; both perhaps issuing in the same result. The immensity of space, with all its countless orbs and systems, may represent the economy of salvation itself—the purpose of God, as it has always been in his unchangeable mind. Or, the visible heaven, as it appears to us,—an immense picture of the power of God,—may be a figure of the *picture* of his redeeming power, presented in the volume of revelation.

In the first case, the *door* opened in heaven would represent the means of admission into the economy of redemption itself, affording the disciple admitted, a participation of its benefits ; equivalent to the privileges of adoption in Christ : as he himself says, John x. 9, I am the door, ἡ θύρα ; by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

In the second case, the door opened in heaven would represent the means of arriving at a right understanding of this economy ; the access by which the mind obtains an insight into the mysteries of the plan of redemption. Here too, Christ, in what he has done and taught, may be still said to be the door—a certain degree of the knowledge of Christ being the means of comprehending the mystery of faith—and this door a figure somewhat equivalent to that of the keys of the kingdom of heaven. This last sense, that is, contemplating heaven, or the heavens, as a figure of the *exhibition* of the plan of divine grace, rather than of the plan, or economy itself, appears to accord best with the purpose of the Apocalypse ; unveiling, as it does, the mysterious principles of the economy of redemption.

§ 117. ‘ And the first voice which I heard,’ &c.—or rather, as it might be read, “ And behold, the first voice which I heard,” (Rev. i. 10, 11,) was now as a trumpet speaking to me. The scene is changed, but the voice, or source of revelation, is still the same, and the character of the voice is the same—“as of a trumpet.” This frequent allusion to the voice, or sound of a trumpet, cannot be without some peculiar meaning, reminding us, as it does, of what Paul says of the same instrument, 1 Cor. xv. 52, “ For the trumpet shall sound ;” and 1 Thess. iv. 16, “ For the Lord himself shall descend, &c., with the trump of God.”

‘ Come up hither.’—Raise your mind to the contemplation of things, or truths, in their spiritual sense. To be *in heaven*, being equivalent to the possession of a spiritual understanding—the contemplation of heavenly



things, as distinguished from earthly things, alluded to John iii. 12, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" So, to *come up*, or to be up, as upon a certain elevation, appears to be figurative in Scripture of this peculiarly spiritual insight. God revealed himself to Moses on the top of Mount Sinai, Ex. xix. 20; and from off the top of Mount Pisgah, Moses beheld the promised land, and Balaam in *spirit* contemplated the coming of Christ as "from the top of the rock," Numb. xxiii. 9. As it is said, also, of the exhibition of the source whence the true bread of life is derived, Ps. lxxii. 16, "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth on the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon; and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. His name shall endure forever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him—all nations shall call him blessed." Jesus himself is said to have been taken up into an exceeding high mountain, when shown all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and it was *in a high mountain apart* that his transfiguration took place, when he was seen in glory—Moses and Elias ministering to him: so we may say that, for the contemplation of things in a spiritual sense, we need an intellectual atmosphere above the mists of literal interpretation.

'And I will show thee things which must be hereafter,'—or, rather, the things which are to be after these things. The words at the close of the verse, rendered *hereafter*, being the same as those at the beginning, translated *after this*, and at the commencement of the seventh chapter, *after these things*. The sense of the invitation must, therefore, be this: Come up hither, and I will show thee the things which are yet to be exhibited; the use of the future tense, or that which is equivalent to it, being applicable to the process of representation, and not to events taking place at some distant period of time.

Vs. 2, 3. And immediately I was in the Spirit: and behold, a throne was set in heaven, and (one) sat on the throne, and he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

Καὶ εὐθέως ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι· καὶ ἰδοὺ, θρόνος ἔκειτο ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου καθήμενος, καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ἦν ὅμοιος ὁράσει λίθῳ ἰάσπιδι καὶ σαρδίῳ, καὶ ἵρις κυκλόθεν τοῦ θρόνου ὅμοιος ὁράσει σμαραγδίνῳ.

§ 118. And immediately I was in the Spirit,'—or rather, I became in spirit, (§ 24,)—my mind was opened to see things in their spiritual sense. In conformity with the invitation, "come up," immediately I was up, or became so;—to come up, being equivalent to being *in spirit*: and to be in spirit, being in effect to *come up*. The door opened was in heaven—the apostle was invited to come up, of course into heaven; he did come up by

being in spirit—he was then in heaven. To be in heaven, therefore, in apocalyptic language, is to be *in spirit*. So, to see the things of the kingdom of God in their proper spiritual sense, is to see heavenly things; and to be in that position of mind, in which a spiritual view is obtained of all the mysteries of redemption, is to be, figuratively speaking, in heaven. The apostle had been in spirit during the previous exhibition; but that scene had entirely past away, and a new one is now to be contemplated. Without being *in spirit*, the apostle could not have seen the Son of man in the midst of the golden candlesticks; and, without being *in spirit*, he could not see the things about to be exhibited.

‘And behold, a throne was set in heaven.’—Here commences a description of what we may call the first scene of the second act—the *act* itself continuing; and the same august assemblage being supposed to be present, at least as far as the conclusion of the 12th chapter. So far the scene apparently is laid in heaven; whatever is witnessed on earth, being seen as from heaven, or passing before the apostle’s mind, as an exhibition in heaven of things on the earth. He does not say, I saw heaven opened, as the promise was given to Nathaniel, John i. 51, alluding to the greater things to be made known to him: “Hereafter ye shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.” The apostle is now to be considered in heaven—he had come up—he has entered the opened door, and he is describing what he sees about him; he is in spirit—he has a spiritual discernment of heavenly *mysteries*; but he describes the mysteries revealed in figures, to be fully understood only by those who are like himself in spirit, or who possess an equally spiritual understanding.

The word rendered *throne*, signifies either a throne or seat; but if a seat, the character of the seat depends upon the circumstances under which it is represented to exist. A king may make use of any seat he pleases as a throne; it is not the seat which gives importance to the king, but it is the use the king makes of his seat which gives it the importance of a throne, and which makes it the instrument of exhibiting the occupant as a sovereign. From what is said in the remainder of this chapter, there is no doubt but that the seat the apostle here describes is strictly a throne—a seat marking out the pre-eminence and sovereign power of him who occupies it. As such, this throne represents some principle exhibiting the supremacy of the Most High, showing Him to be a sovereign; as we find by the homage described in the 8th verse, that the one sitting on this throne is no other than the Lord God Almighty.

Justice and judgment are declared to be the habitation of the throne of God, Ps. lxxxix. 14; and a king is spoken of as sitting upon a throne of judgment, Prov. xx. 8. In the mixed governments of modern times

the judicial authority is so frequently separated from executive power, that we are apt to associate with the supremacy of the ruler of a nation but an imperfect idea of complete sovereignty. Kings in ancient days, however, were judges; a king was then supposed to possess, in his own breast, the power of deciding between right and wrong: of this we have a remarkable instance in the judgment of Solomon, (1 Kings iii. 25.) The tribunal, or seat of judgment, was then identical with the throne. This peculiarity is the more to be borne in mind because the exhibition in this scene is that of the Deity, in his sovereign judicial capacity especially—the Supreme Judge. The plan of mercy is not yet developed, although, as we shall see, there is in the splendid array described, an intimation of this divine attribute. We may take the throne, therefore, here alluded to, as a figure of the element of divine judgment.

§ 119. ‘And he that sat, was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone.’—Or rather, in appearance like a stone, jasper and sardine. Not like two stones, but one stone, combining in appearance the qualities of these two gems. The jasper of the apostle was probably what we commonly term the diamond; distinguished for its impenetrability, or hardness, its pure transparency, and its brilliancy. It is said to have been of various colours, but this variety of colours may have arisen only from the reflected tint of surrounding objects. The sardine is supposed to have been the modern carnelian, (Rob. Lex. 311, 677,) deriving its name from its resemblance in colour to flesh, (*sarks*;) flesh being, as we have before observed, a figure of righteousness, or moral perfection. Thus we have, in the characteristics of these precious stones, the representatives of inflexibility, purity, glory, and righteousness, as the peculiar attributes of the Sovereign Judge. These two gems might likewise be supposed to represent the strength and beauty which are said to be in the sanctuary of God, Ps. xvi. 6; but it may be a question whether the present exhibition is that of the Deity *in his sanctuary*.

‘And a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.’—There is no article prefixed to the word translated rainbow, (*iris*;) and we might take the same liberty with it as our translators have sometimes taken with the term spirit, and say, *The* rainbow was round about the throne; but that is not material or necessary here, although it would appear more in keeping with the scriptural account of the design of this natural phenomenon.

Except in the vision of Ezekiel, (ch. i. 28,) the only allusion we have to the rainbow in any other portion of the Scriptures than the Apocalypse, is in the account given of the covenant made with Noah and his posterity, Genesis ix. 11–16; there the *bow* of God is said to be set in the heavens,\*

\* “I do set *my* bow in the cloud,” &c.



as a token of assurance that the earth shall no more be destroyed by a flood—that the ground should be no more cursed for man's sake, notwithstanding the wickedness and evil imaginations of man's heart were as great as they were before this fearful visitation.

The rainbow was thus a token of the sparing mercy of the Almighty ; not, we may presume, that it was first created after the flood for this purpose, but having been originally created with the design of this application, its purpose was then pointed out. The formation of the rainbow is instrumentally effected by the reflection and refraction of the sun's rays from the falling drops of water ; perhaps we may say, also, by the intermingling of these rays with the particles of rain : its beautiful appearance resulting from the united action of the sun, and of the element of water. Corresponding with this, by the eye of faith, we perceive, in the Gospel display of divine mercy, a result of the combined influence of the Sun of righteousness and of the fountain opened for the washing away of sin and uncleanness. In other words, the imputed righteousness of Christ and his atonement, are the two elements of the exhibition of divine mercy, affording the disciple a token of his preservation from the merited wrath of infinite justice. As the descendant of Noah looked to the bow in the clouds, and as the wounded Israelite in the wilderness looked to the serpent lifted up, so the Christian looks to the Gospel for an assurance of the covenant mercies of his God.

§ 120. But the rainbow about the throne on this occasion seems to have been wanting in the varied and splendid tints produced by a full and perfect action of solar rays. It was of a sea-green colour ;—in appearance like an emerald. An appearance more indicative of the element of wrath than of that of mercy. Or, if we would carry the analogy further, the bow here may be said to reflect the colour prevalent in the clothing of the earth, rather than the brilliancy of that celestial orb, so happily a type of Him, who is said to clothe Himself with light, (the perfection of righteousness,) as with a garment. In this *green* rainbow, therefore, we may perceive the representation of an indistinct conception of the gracious provision of the new covenant, not yet supposed to be fully revealed. The scene contemplated, is that of the Deity seated on a throne of *judgment* ; equivalent to the exhibition of the divine character under the old dispensation : the token of mercy being a token only of forbearance, and not of free and entire forgiveness. The beholders of this rainbow contemplate it as a reflection, in part at least, of their own moral perfection ; an intermingling of their merits and of their works of propitiation with the merits of their Redeemer—the difference of colour arising from a deficiency in the optics of the beholder, not in the object itself—as if we were left to frame our views of the plan of redemption from the Old Testament alone ; or as if, with the New Testament in our hands, we regarded the Gospel only as a part of the

old dispensation ; or, as if the apostles on the mount had seen their Master ministering to Moses and Elias, instead of beholding, as they did, Moses and Elias ministering to him.

The law and the prophets were until John ; since that time the kingdom of God is preached, (Luke xvi. 16.) The law set forth its propitiatory provisions, but they are legal provisions, and to be met by works of man's performance. The prophets, too, uttered their conditional promises of mercy ; but they were conditional. The rainbow, under the old dispensation, was thus in sight like an emerald. The Lamb of God had not yet made his appearance ; the Book of grace had not yet been opened ; the Sun of righteousness, with healing in his wings, had not yet arisen. But this epoch we may suppose to be now about being reached, as we shall see in the next chapter.

Vs. 4, 5, 6. And round about the throne (were) four and twenty seats ; and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment ; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings, and voices. And (there were) seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. And before the throne (there was) a sea of glass like unto crystal : and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

Καὶ κυκλόθεν τοῦ θρόνου θρόνοι εἰκοσι-  
τέσσαρες· καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς θρόνους εἰκοσιτέ-  
σσαρες πρεσβυτέρους καθήμενους, περιβεβλη-  
μένους ἐν ἱματίοις λευκοῖς, καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς  
κεφαλὰς αὐτῶν στεφάνους χρυσοῦς. Καὶ ἐκ  
τοῦ θρόνου ἐκπορεύονται ἄστραπαὶ καὶ φω-  
ναὶ καὶ βρονταί· καὶ ἐπὶ λαμπάδες πυρὸς  
καίόμεναι ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου, αἱ εἰσι τὰ  
ἐπὶ πνεύματα τοῦ Θεοῦ· καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ  
θρόνου ὡς θάλασσα ὑαλίνη, ὅμοια χρυσ-  
τάλλῳ· καὶ ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ κύκλῳ  
τοῦ θρόνου τέσσαρα ζῶα ἑκαστὸν ὁφθαλ-  
μῶν ἔμπροσθεν καὶ ὀπίσθεν.

§ 121. We class these three verses together, because they all relate more particularly to the throne, and confirm our apprehension that this throne is a seat or tribunal, especially of judgment : the scene presenting an exhibition of the Deity and his attributes, as they were contemplated prior to the gospel development of sovereign mercy.

‘And round about the throne four and twenty seats, and upon the seats,’ &c.—The word here translated *seats*, is the same as that just before rendered throne ; but it is plain that these seats (*θρόνοι*), are to be distinguished from that which is so repeatedly spoken of as *the* throne, or seat, encircled by the others. These twenty-four seats are subordinate thrones, but they may still be contemplated as tribunals of judgment ;—as it is said, in allusion to the spiritual Jerusalem, Ps. cxxii. 5, “There are set thrones of judgment—the thrones of the house of David.” The figure may be borrowed from the council of twenty-three elders, said to have been constituted at Jerusalem, acting as a judicial assembly, (Cruden. Concord. art. Elder.) The number, twenty-four, may be put for the twelve patriarchs and the twelve minor prophets, representing so many heads or principles of the old dispensa-

tion, or, in the aggregate, representing the dispensation itself; or it may be put for the twelve patriarchs and the twelve apostles, as a figure of the elements both of the old and new dispensations, as it was also promised to the apostles, Matt. xix. 28, and Luke xxii. 30, that they should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. That is, the leading elements of truth in the Old and New Testaments are to be virtually the judges in matters of doctrine pertaining to the mystery of redemption. The elements of the new covenant being associated with those of the old from the beginning, although not equally developed to human understanding; as the principles of mercy, as well as of justice, have always been constituents of the divine character. In all the provisions, dispensations, and revelations of God, they have been manifested; although the manner, in which the elements of mercy have been reconciled with those of justice, is developed only in the Gospel.

We incline however to the opinion, that these twenty-four elders represent the patriarchs and prophets, or especially the elements of the old dispensation, first, on account of their appellation of *elders*, or presbyters, pre-eminently—the elements of the gospel occupying, as we may say, the rank of *juniors*; secondly, because the present scene, as we have suggested, is one antecedent to gospel revelation; and thirdly, because, when the elements of the old and new dispensations are supposed to co-operate, they are represented, as we shall notice hereafter, by the number 144, or twelve multiplied into twelve. The twenty-four tribunals, therefore, around the throne of the Supreme Judge, may be said to symbolize something equivalent to *the law* and *the testimony*. The twenty-four elders are the *triers*, by which all doctrines are to be tried, as it is said, Is. viii. 20, “If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

§ 122. ‘Sitting, clothed in white.’—These elders were seen upon their tribunals of judgment—not idle, but occupied with the performance of their respective functions. So the process of this trial may be said to be in perpetual operation. Doctrines and principles are now tried and to be tried by the standard of the law and of the testimony, and the truth is and has been continually elicited. Truth and error are to grow together until the harvest; but the fields are already white unto the harvest, and the reapers are already engaged. The wheat—the truth—is being gathered in, and the tares—the errors—are being separated for destruction.

‘Clothed in white.’—White linen is expressly said (Rev. xix. 8) to be the righteousness of saints; that is, we suppose, the divine righteousness imputed to the saints, for there is none other truly *white*, as already remarked. The elements of the law and testimony, acting as triers, appear in the uniform and livery of this imputed righteousness, showing their qualification and destination for the office of judges, as the judicial robe is intended to



point out the authority of him who wears it. This white clothing accordingly represents the elders rather as the ministers of this righteousness, than as the beneficiaries of it.

‘And they had on their heads crowns of gold.’—Tokens of victory—crowns, not diadems—crowns of *truth*, (golden,) capable of withstanding the test, or trial of the Assayer; and tokens of victory in the cause of truth. In which cause, each of these judges or triers is pointed out as having been triumphant, or as destined to be so; their victory corresponding with that attributable to the law and to the testimony, (§ 121.)

§ 123. ‘And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings, and voices,’ or sounds.—Accompaniments corresponding almost precisely with those attending the giving of the law, as described Exod. xix. 16 and 18: “And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.” So, Ps. l. 3, “Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.” That is, tempestuous with thunderings and lightnings. And Ps. xcvi. 2, “Clouds and darkness are round about him; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. His lightnings enlightened the world; the earth saw, and trembled.” These passages cannot but indicate that wherever we find this exhibition of thunderings, and lightnings, and noises, or voices, there the Deity is manifested, especially in his judicial as well as his sovereign character.

‘And seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.’—These must be the same Spirits as those mentioned Rev. i. 4, supposed to be emanations, or distinct operations, of the Holy Spirit. The same Holy Spirit, under the legal dispensation, a devouring fire, being, under the Gospel dispensation, the comforter and source of grace and peace. Under the latter aspect, these emanations are spoken of only as seven spirits before the throne: under the former, that is, in the judicial representation, they are described as lamps of fire *burning* before the throne; the process of *burning*, being peculiar to the action of Divine justice,—as Is. iv. 4, where the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning are described as being in joint operation. This burning may have some allusion to the operation of that fire which is to “try every man’s work of what sort it is.”

‘Which are the seven Spirits of God.’—We have already suggested (§ 9) that the peculiarity of this number *seven* is, that it constitutes an integer, being put for the whole of whatever may be represented by it—as

the seven Spirits of God are equal to the whole Holy Spirit—seven being the figure of something perfect, complete, entire. So the seven churches are the whole church ; contemplated, perhaps, under seven different aspects.

There are a number of spirits mentioned in the Scriptures, which may be said to be Spirits of God ; or rather, there are a number of appellations of this one Spirit. In Gen. i. 2, it is said, “ The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” Job. xxvii. 3, “ The Spirit of God is in my nostrils,” and xxxiii. 4, “ The Spirit of God hath made me.” Here the term is applicable, in a general sense, to the creative and preserving power of the Deity ; but in most other passages of the Scriptures, there seems to be no distinction drawn between the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of God. The first being spoken of, Rom. xv. 16, and the last, 1 Cor. vi. 11, as the same power or instrument of sanctification. We may presume, therefore, that, by the seven Spirits of God, something is to be understood equivalent to seven operations of the *Holy Spirit*—seven peculiar modes in which Divine power is manifested, with immediate reference to the work of redemption. Such, for example, as the Spirit of truth, John xiv. 17, xv. 26, and xvi. 13 ; the Spirit of adoption, Rom. viii. 15 ; the Spirit of promise, Eph. i. 13 ; the Spirit of glory, 1 Pet. iv. 14 ; the Spirit of grace, Heb. x. 29 ; the Spirit of faith, ii. Cor. iv. 13 ; the Spirit of sanctification, 2 Thess. ii. 13 ; and 1 Pet. i. 2. Not that even these are different operations, but rather that they are different figures, under which the same operation is represented ; as, to be adopted in Christ, is to be set apart, or sanctified in him.

These Spirits are “ before the throne.” They are the chosen means or instruments of the Divine Sovereign. The appointed ministers of the Supreme Ruler. They are compared to fire and to flame, because, as powerful exhibitions of the divine word or purpose, they try and consume the delusive doctrines of error. These, however, are only our suggestions. The appellations above selected are Scripture terms, and it appears reasonable, at least, in searching for the character of the Spirits of God, spoken of in the Scriptures, that we should gather the meaning of these terms from those Scriptures, and not from other sources.

It may be said, that if, as we have supposed, the exhibition now under consideration be that of the Supreme Being, in his judicial character especially, these lamps, or spirits, should be of the same character. But, as we have before remarked, the attributes of God must have been the same from all eternity ; and the elements of mercy, as well as those of justice, have always formed a portion of these attributes. Besides, we have the express declaration, Rev. i. 4, that *grace and peace* come from the seven Spirits before the throne ; and these seven lamps burning before the throne, are declared to be the seven Spirits of God. They are attributes of his sovereignty, even on

the tribunal of justice, although their beneficent operation may not be there exhibited.

§ 124. ‘And before the throne a sea of glass like unto crystal,’—or, more strictly, a transparent sea like unto crystal—the artificial substance, *glass*, not being generally known in the time of the apostle: and the word rendered in our common version *of glass*, being, as it will be perceived, an adjective, and not a substantive, and applicable to any pellucid material.

The only other place in which the term *crystal* is made use of in the New Testament, as applicable to a body of water, is at the close of this vision, (Rev. xxii. 1 :) “And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.”

Collating the two passages, we are struck with the difference, that, although both these elements are compared for transparency to the same substance, and both are mentioned in immediate connection with the *throne*, they differ in this, that one is a sea, and the other a river. The difference is not in their appearance, but in their essential qualities; sea-water being incapable of sustaining life, and ill adapted even to the purpose of purification, while pure river-water is peculiarly suitable for both these purposes. The peculiar characteristic of the sea is its destructive power: the characteristic of a stream of pure and wholesome water is its life-giving and fructifying capability. Fresh water is indispensable for animal life; it cleanses, too, without destroying: as a figure, it thus happily represents the indispensable element of salvation, the atonement of a Redeemer—cleansing the soul from the guilt of sin, while it preserves the eternal life of the sinner. The water of the sea, on the contrary, so far from allaying the sensation of thirst, increases the distress occasioned by it; while it can cleanse only by washing away the objects exposed to its action, as a deluge may purify the surface of the earth by sweeping every thing before it. The sea and the waves roaring, (Luke xxi. 25,) are thus figurative, in Scripture, of the threatenings of divine justice; the sea itself representing the element of the destruction pronounced by the law upon every soul of man that doeth evil. As, in a literal sense, it was only the voice of Jesus that could quiet the tempest to which his followers were exposed, so, in a spiritual sense, it is only by his redeeming and atoning power, that the progress of God’s avenging justice can be stayed; and, while labouring under the alarm of a guilty conscience, so it is only in proportion as the disciple hears the blessed voice of his Redeemer, that he can feel his apprehensions allayed. The *sea* before the throne thus represents the provision for meeting the requisitions of vindictive justice. The element of punishment forms, as we may say, a prominent feature in this solemn exhibition of judicial array; as in ancient criminal courts the lictors, or executioners of the sentence of



the law, were present with the judge, perhaps as much to exhibit the power of the supreme authority, as to carry its decisions into effect.

This sea of glass was in a quiescent state ; for the water of the sea, when violently agitated, is not clear : so the preparation only for executing the sentence of the law, whatever that sentence may be, and not the execution of it, is here represented. The divine power to punish is shown, but fearful and destructive as the operation must be, it is restrained by the forbearance and long-suffering of the Sovereign. The sea was *clear* as crystal : so it is an essential to the character of God that he should be *clear* when he judges, (Ps. li. 4.) The clearness and impenetrability of crystal, may thus represent the perfect purity and inflexibility of divine justice.

Consistently with our remarks upon the preceding figures, it may be said, that we ought, even here, to suppose some representation of the purpose of divine mercy, existing from all eternity in the mind of an unchangeable Being, such as Jehovah declares himself to be, Mal. iii. 6 ; “ For I am the Lord, I change not ; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.” And we do find this in the nature of the figure selected to represent this element of justice.

The action of the natural sun extracts from the *sea* the pure particles of water ; these particles, exhaled, are condensed and form clouds. The clouds are carried to the shores, and, intercepted by the high lands, accumulate and fall in showers upon the earth ; more especially in the mountainous regions, whence, by innumerable streams they descend in rivers, replenishing the springs and fountains, and affording the means of purifying and sustaining every living thing. So, from the action of the Sun of righteousness, even upon the element of vindictive justice, originates that life-giving, soul-cleansing supply, whence issues the fountain spoken of by the prophet, (Zech. xiii. 1,) and the river of life seen by the apostle, (Rev. xxii. 1.) The provision of mercy, as well as of justice, is there, before the throne ; but the book developing the mystery is not yet opened.

§ 125 ‘ And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, four beasts full of eyes, before and behind.’—The term *beasts*, employed in this place, in our common version, is unfortunate and injudicious. Unfortunate, because we associate with this English appellation something in a bad sense ; whereas it is plain that these four attendants of the throne are subjects to be contemplated with favour and veneration. It is injudicious, because it is the term applied to the horned and idolatrous monsters afterwards described ; while in the original these very different animals are designated by different appellations : that of ζῶα, signifying *living things*, or *creatures*, being given to the four animals around the throne ; and that of θηρίον, a wild, unclean, or ferocious beast, being the appellation assigned to the animals seen to proceed from the sea and earth, Rev. xiii. 1 and 11.

The term ζῶα is that employed in the Septuagint translation of Ezekiel's vision, (Ezek. i. 5,) rendered in our common version by the *living creatures*, which appellation would have been much more appropriate for these four animals seen about the throne. The term ζῶον, plural ζῶα, is met with but in three passages of the New Testament, exclusive of the Apocalypse, and in only one of these, (Heb. xiii. 11,) unaccompanied with an adjective, specifying its character. In that passage it is very evidently applied to animals, Levitically *clean*—the *beasts*, as the word is there translated, being supposed to be those slaughtered in sacrifice, and consequently *clean*. On the other hand, the term θηρίον is applied, Mark i. 13, to the wild beasts of the wilderness; Acts x. 12, to unclean animals; Acts xxviii. 4 and 5, to the serpent that fastened upon Paul's hand; Tit. i. 12, to the Cretians, καὶ θηρία, evil beasts, or unclean animals; and James iii. 7, to wild beasts.

We accordingly suppose these four *living creatures*, intimately connected with the throne, to be *opposites* of wild or destructive, or Levitically unclean animals; and to represent four principles, or elements, sustaining, or subordinate to that principle which exhibits especially the sovereignty of God, or which, as a tribunal of justice, designates its occupant as the Supreme Judge. Their number, *four*, corresponds with that of the living creatures seen in vision by the prophet, and their eyes before and behind correspond in some degree with the four faces of Ezekiel's living creatures, enabling them to regard on all sides around them. So, too, in this vision of the prophet, the firmament above, or upon the heads of the living creatures, was in appearance like crystal,—“the terrible crystal,” as we have rendered it—and above this firmament (or sea) of crystal, was the likeness of a throne, with the likeness as the appearance of a man above it, together with the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain.

The two visions have so strong a resemblance, that perhaps the proper understanding of one would afford a key to the other. We can only at present, however, approximate an explanation, by supposing them both to represent a manifestation of the judicial character of the Deity. The four living creatures in both instances, symbolizing, no doubt, four attributes, or elements of divine sovereignty.

‘Full of eyes before and behind,’—The eyes of the apocalyptic animals, before and behind, mark them out as having a retrospective as well as a prospective action—looking to the past as well as to the future—perhaps characterizing their relation to the old and to the new economy; the four faces of Ezekiel's animals, representing a similar ubiquity of regard.

V. 7. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.

Καὶ τὸ ζῶον τὸ πρῶτον ὅμοιον λέοντι, καὶ τὸ δεύτερον ζῶον ὅμοιον μόσχῳ, καὶ τὸ τρίτον ζῶον ἔχον τὸ πρόσωπον ὡς ἀνθρώπου, καὶ τὸ τέταρτον ζῶον ὅμοιον ἀετὶ πετομένῳ.

§ 126. ‘And the first beast,’ &c.—So it is said of the living creatures of Ezekiel’s vision, “As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox, on the left side; and they four had also the face of an eagle.” The word translated *a calf*, in the Apocalypse, being the same in the Septuagint as that which we render, in Ezekiel, by the term *ox*. These living creatures, however, we must bear in mind, were not in either case the animals themselves *toto corpore*. There was only something in their appearance resembling these animals, as the physiognomy of man is supposed to show his character; so the living creatures of Ezekiel are said to have the faces of the animals alluded to, that is, the characteristics in a spiritual and scriptural sense.

The lion is cited, in Scripture, particularly as an object of fear and dread, on account of his ferocity and strength. What we call the nobler qualities of the animal are not there noticed. So, Deut. xxxiii. 20, “Gad dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head;” and, Judges xiv. 18, “The men said, What is stronger than a lion?” Lions were also instruments of divine wrath for the punishment of disobedience, 1 Kings xiii. 24–26, and xx. 36. The king’s wrath, and the fear of the king, are said to be as a roaring lion, Prov. xix. 12, and xx. 2; and the roaring of a lion is repeatedly alluded to as something peculiarly intimidating. Hence, we may suppose the living creature like a lion, to represent the principle of vindictive justice; as, to be given to the lion, or to be amongst young lions, is a scriptural figure, for being on the brink of destruction. We may suppose this beast, or living creature, accordingly to represent the power of the sovereign to avenge his own cause—to punish, as well as to condemn; as it is expressed, Rom. xii. 19, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.”

§ 127. ‘The second animal was like a calf.’—An ox, or young bullock, as the Greek term *μόσχος* is variously rendered. A young bullock without blemish, was the sin-offering prescribed, Lev. iv. 3–21, for the sin of the priest, and for that of the whole congregation. The blood of this bullock was the blood of sprinkling, typical of that which, as the apostle says, speaketh better things than the blood of Abel:—the atoning offering carried forth without the camp, as Christ himself suffered without the gate. The bullock was also a *clean* animal, dividing the hoof: acceptable as a sacrifice, and permitted as an article of food—an element of life. This living crea-



ture like a calf, therefore, may be supposed to represent that principle of propitiation, or vicarious offering, upon which divine mercy is extended to the sinner, or perhaps a symbol of divine mercy itself;—the lion and the calf, or bullock, being employed as figures of two principles of divine government, apparently as opposed to each other, as these two animals are opposite in their natures.

The same imagery is met with in the language of the prophet, predicting the blessings of Messiah's reign, Is. xi. 6, "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox." A figurative description of the opposing principles of Justice and Mercy, reconciled in the economy of grace; the instrumentality of the *little child*, being no doubt that of the holy child *Jesus*, (Acts iv. 27 and 30,) alluded to in another prediction: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given," &c., Is. ix. 6.

§ 128. 'And the third living creature had the face as a man.'—An animal with a human face may be supposed to possess the faculty of reason, or wisdom, in which man excels all other creatures in this state of existence. The creature is not spoken of as being like a man, but it had a human face, the index of mind. We may suppose this animal to represent the attribute of mind or wisdom. The wisdom of God; especially the wisdom exhibited in devising the means of reconciling his justice and his mercy—the wisdom of God in a mystery.

'And the fourth like a flying eagle.'—Not resembling the bird in face or form, but in action. Like to an eagle when flying—spreading abroad her wings—taking her young upon them—bearing them on her wings, Deut. xxxii. 11. In allusion to which, God himself says to the people of Israel, Exod. xix. 4, "Ye have seen how I bare you on eagles' wings." Wings are also a scriptural figure of means of protection, or shelter—as Ruth ii. 12, "Under whose wings thou art come to trust;" Ps. xvii. 8, "Hide me under the shadow of thy wings;" lxiii. 7, "In the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice;" xxxvi. 7, "How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God; therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings;" lvii. 1, "Be merciful unto me, O God, for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge;" lxi. 4, "I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings;" xci. 4, "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler." Taking these passages into consideration, we may suppose the protection afforded by the flying eagle to her young, the spreading out of her wings, to be a figure of that protection and support which God provides for those depending upon Him in his own *im-*

*puted righteousness* ;—a protection sometimes represented as a robe, a house, a tabernacle, or a shield ; and sometimes spoken of as an upholding, or bearing up, of his own right hand. The eagle flying representing, perhaps, the Holy Spirit as the Comforter exhibiting this gracious provision, and *bringing near* this righteousness, Is. xlv. 13.

The principles of divine justice, of propitiation or mercy, of sovereign purpose, and of gracious imputation, may be thus represented by the four living creatures, in the midst of, and round about the throne ;—principles existing unchangeably, and from all eternity, having always been in and about the throne—referring to the old as well as to the new economy, typically revealed under the first dispensation, and expressly taught under the last.

V. 8. And the four beasts [*living creatures*] had each of them six wings about (him), and (they were) full of eyes within : and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

Καὶ τὰ τέσσαρα ζῶα, ἕν καθ' ἕν αὐτῶν ἔχον ἀνὰ πτέρυγας ἑξ, κυκλόθεν καὶ ἑσπόμεν γέμουσιν ὀφθαλμῶν, καὶ ἀνάπαυσιν οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτός, λέγοντες ἅγιος, ἅγιος, ἅγιος κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ, ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος.

§ 129. ‘Had each of them six wings, round about and within full of eyes.’—According to the order of the Greek, and as it is pointed in the edition from which we copy—the words within parenthesis being supplied by our translators, as if it were the animals that were full of eyes—whereas, the wings must be referred to here, the animals having been already described as thus abundantly supplied with the organs of knowledge ;—the abundance of the supply in both cases indicating that, whatever the creatures or their wings represent, it must be something combining with it the omniscience of the Deity.

The number of the wings, six, reminds us of an appearance somewhat similar, described by one of the prophets, (Is. vi. 1–3,) “I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims ; (or, according to the Septuagint, around him stood the seraphim ;) each one had six wings ; with twain he covered (or veiled) his face, and with twain he covered (or veiled) his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of Hosts : the whole earth is full of his glory.”

The number of these seraphim is not mentioned, nor is the appellation to be found elsewhere in the sacred volume, although the prophet speaks of them as of something familiarly known. Their avocation is the same as that of the four living creatures of the Apocalypse ; and whatever may be represented by both, or either of them, it must be something virtually proclaiming or making known the holiness, sanctification, or setting apart (*ἁγιασμός*) of the Lord, as a Being distinct from all others.

The passage throws some light on the uses of the wings: "With twain he covered (or veiled) his face,"—concealing his purpose, or that of his mission; as the divine purpose was veiled under the old dispensation by dark sayings, (Ps. xlix. 4,) or by the covering of types, symbols, and figurative expressions. With twain he covered his feet, or concealed his progress. As is said of the Most High, (Ps. lxxvii. 19,) "Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known;" and 1 Cor. ii. 11 and 16, "For what man knoweth the things (purposes) of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him? Even so, the things (purposes) of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God." "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him?" or, as it is expressed, Rom. xi. 34, "Who hath been his counsellor?" With twain he did fly.—An intimation of the certain and rapid progress of the principles, or elements, represented by these *Seraphim*, notwithstanding the concealment before described; this progress in the development of truth virtually performing what they are said to proclaim: that is, manifesting the holiness of the Almighty.

'And full of eyes within.'—We have already supposed this to apply to the wings. By pointing the word *ὀφθαλμοί*, as if in parenthesis, we might read the passage, "Each of them had six wings, encircling, and within they were full of eyes;" but the difference is hardly worth discussion. The wings are parts of the body; and if the whole animal be full of eyes—as full as possible—its wings must be full of eyes. The prominent feature of the figure we still presume to be that of omniscience, as before intimated. The four living creatures represent four attributes of Jehovah, in purpose and action so blended with his omniscience, that one cannot be separated from the other. So the rings of the wheels, in the first vision of Ezekiel, were full of eyes; and in the vision by the river Chebar, it is said of the cherubim, "Their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels were full of eyes round about," (Ezek. i. 18, and x. 12)—the omniscience of the Deity pervading the whole instrument of his will.

'And they rest not, day nor night,' &c., &c.—This ascription of holiness, is something in continual and perpetual operation—it is something virtually proclaiming the eternity of the Almighty, as well as his holiness; while the treble repetition of the term *holy*, may imply also, as some suppose, the design of setting forth the triune personality of the object of adoration. If these four living creatures represent four elements of divine sovereignty, the operation of these elements is virtually that of setting forth the Holiness, the Eternity, and the Trinity of Jehovah. This operation has been, is, and always will be, in process; but it is seen, or exhibited, only in proportion as it is developed in the revelation which Jesus Christ makes of



himself. As it was seen in vision by the apostle in a figurative manner on this occasion, it will be seen by the disciple in a spiritual sense whenever and wherever the truths of divine revelation are fully understood.

Vs. 9, 10, 11. And when those beasts [living creatures] give glory, and honour, and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Καὶ ὅταν δάσονται τὰ ζῶα δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ εὐχαριστίαν τῷ καθήμενῳ ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου, τῷ ζῶντι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων, πρὸς αὐτὸν οἱ εἰκοσιτέσσαρες πρεσβύτεροι ἐνώπιον τοῦ καθήμενου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου, καὶ προσκυνήσουσι τῷ ζῶντι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων, καὶ βαλοῦσι τοὺς στεφάνους αὐτῶν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου, λέγοντες· ἅγιος εἶ, ὁ κύριος· καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν, λαβεῖν τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὴν τιμὴν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν· ὅτι σὺ ἔκτισας τὰ πάντα, καὶ διὰ τὸ θέλημα σου ἦσαν καὶ ἐκτίσθησαν.

§ 130. ‘And when the living creatures,’ &c.—Here the ascription of holiness to the almighty and eternal God, mentioned in the preceding verse, is referred to as equivalent to giving glory, and honour, and thanks to him that sat on the throne; that is, the elements of justice, mercy, &c., as displayed in the plan of redemption, are the instruments of giving to God the glory, honour, and grateful praise due to his name. It is not till the four living creatures perform their act of homage, that the elders perform their act of prostration, and cast their crowns before the throne. The reciprocal action of the elders, is a consequence, or result, of that of the four living creatures. When the four living creatures utter their voices, the four-and-twenty elders fall down. The four living creatures never cease to offer their ascriptions—they rest not, day nor night—there is no pause in their act of homage; consequently, the four-and-twenty elders never cease to prostrate themselves: that is, the action, or operation of both is *virtually* ceaseless and eternal, although not always manifest to created beings. The apostle, favoured by his heavenly position, witnessed this peculiarity. So it may be witnessed by all who, with him, behold things *in spirit*, or in their spiritual sense. The four-and-twenty elders we suppose to be elements of the Old Testament dispensation, represented by the twelve patriarchs and twelve prophets. This dispensation may be said to have acquired a crown, as excelling in its way; but it was a legal dispensation, though perfect in its kind, subordinate in its design, and destined to be superseded by another. Accordingly, no sooner do the elements of divine sovereignty (the four animals about the throne) exhibit their operation in ascribing glory, honour, and thanks, than this legal dispensation gives way—gives up its crown, or the token of its excellence—acknowledging, as it were, the supremacy of sovereign power, the supremacy of the principle, that the Creator has a right to do as he pleases with his own.

What we say of the legal dispensation as a whole, is equally to be predicated of its twenty-four elements. They received, and were seen to have crowns of gold, (not diadems,) for they excelled as principles of truth. They are manifested to have triumphed, and to wear the token of that triumph; but they performed only a subordinate part. "The ministration of death written and engraved on stones was glorious," but this glory was to be "done away;" "for even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth," 2 Cor. iii. 7-11. The action of the four living creatures we suppose to result, virtually, in a manifestation of this glory that excelleth; and reciprocally with this manifestation, the twenty-four elements of the glory, which was to be done away, give up their crowns.

'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, honour, and power.'—That is, to receive the ascription of it. God has this glory, honour, and power in himself, and of himself. It is for his creatures only to ascribe it to him—to admit and to acknowledge that he has it; and even here the word rendered receive, might better have been translated, take; as the phrase, 'thou art worthy,' would have been better expressed by that of *it becomes thee*, which appears to be the sense: It becomes thee, O Lord, to take glory, honour, and power; and this especially for the reason assigned.

§ 131. 'For thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.'—As the Creator of all things, it becomes God to assume the glory, honour, and power of his own work. In the nature of things, this belongs to him. It cannot be otherwise. Who else could reasonably, or justly, have the glory of what God has done? The case is entirely different with every created being. The creature can do nothing of itself—man acts only by the power which God gives. The honour and glory of what a man does, and ascription of power, belong therefore not to him, but to his Creator—to him who gives the power to perform whatever the creature does, or effects.

But besides this, it becomes God to assume this glory and honour of his own work, not only because it is of his own creation, but because it was designed solely for him and for his pleasure. The creature has the pleasure of his employer to consult; and whatever work results from that pleasure, the glory belongs to the employer, and not to the operative. But God has no pleasure to consult other than his own—all things were created by Him, and for Him; to Him, therefore, belongs all the glory,—as well that of the design, or purpose, as that of the manner in which it is accomplished. To Him belongs the glory, because he has the power, morally as well as physically, to give or to withhold, to create or to destroy; He giveth not account of any of his matters, Job xxxiii. 13; He is responsible to no one. The thing formed cannot say to him that formed it, "Why hast thou

made me thus?" Rom. ix. 20; nor can the clay say to him that fashioned it, What makest thou?

We are apt to look upon man as being literally, what he is sometimes inconsiderately termed, the *lord of the creation*; as if—because dominion is said to have been given him over other created objects,—all things were created *for him*. We forget the myriads of wonders and beauties in the vast wildernesses, deserts, and recesses of the earth; on the tops of lofty mountains, at the bottom of the sea, in the seas, and in the atmosphere around us; which never meet the eye of man, so as to form subjects of his contemplation, and of which we might even doubt the utility, if it were not for the assurance of divine revelation, that all things were brought into existence, and are sustained in being, for the pleasure of Him by whom they were created.

§ 132. We have thus, in the scene presented to the apostle, upon his first entrance into the door opened in heaven, an exhibition of the Deity, as the Supreme Being, the Almighty and Eternal God, the Creator of all things, sitting on the throne of his *sovereignty*, receiving continual ascriptions of glory, honour, and thanks, on the principle of this sovereignty; to which principle all the elements of the legal dispensation are represented as subordinate, and as admitting their subordination by joining in this act of homage to the Sovereign, for the reason alone that he is the Creator of all things, and that all things were created for him.

Throughout this exhibition there is no specific allusion to the work of redemption, nor is this work mentioned as one of the grounds of the ascription of praise, although we afterwards find the same worthiness to receive or to take power, and honour, and glory, ascribed to the *Lamb that was slain*, and this because he was slain, (Rev. v. 9, 12, 13.) We accordingly presume that, thus far, the development of the mystery of salvation is not commenced. The attributes of Jehovah, in which this mystery is founded, are represented as existing,—surrounding his throne, and before his throne,—but the beneficent purpose emanating from them, is something yet remaining to be unveiled, or laid open.

The picture presented is analogous to that of the opening of the court of a monarch, upon some extraordinary occasion; such as that, perhaps, of unfolding the views of the sovereign with regard to an object of great importance—the monarch is seen upon the throne, the different functionaries occupy their respective places. The whole arrangement of the monarch's administration is represented; but the declaration of his intentions is something for which the assembly is in anxious expectation. Just at this moment, when all is prepared for the intended announcement, the apostle is admitted as a privileged spectator, having an interest, perhaps, more than he is aware of, in the matters about to be made known; but, at the same



time, having only an indistinct, or vague idea of their nature and character. As such a spectator, he records what he sees with precision and fidelity ; not as something which he fully understands, but as something which in due time will explain itself. Occasionally the friend by whom he obtains admittance to this extraordinary representation, and who is supposed to be ever at his side, gives him a few words of explanation ; but this explanation itself is a part of the vision, and like the other parts requires interpretation, and this by the same uniform rule : as if a stranger were introduced into the court of a foreign prince, by some privileged officer, as a highly favoured individual, to witness an important transaction about to take place, in reference to the government of the prince's own subjects. The language of the court is the language of the country, and the language of the friend attending the stranger is the language of the country also. The explanations of this attendant, therefore, as well as all that which is said in the assembly, are in the same foreign language, and are to be translated by the same rules.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE SEALED BOOK.

V. 1. And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, a book written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals.

Καὶ εἶδον ἐπὶ τὴν δεξιὰν τοῦ καθήμενου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου βιβλίον γεγραμμένον ἔσωθεν καὶ ὀπίσθεν, κατεσφραγισμένον σφραγίσιν ἐπτά.

§ 133. NOTWITHSTANDING the interruption caused here by the division into chapters, there is no change or intermission in the vision itself. In the midst of the scene described in the last chapter, the apostle contemplates what he now describes—the adoration of the living creatures, and the homage of the elders still continuing—the sea of crystal and the burning lamps being still before the throne.

‘I saw in the *right* hand.’—The right hand is distinguished for its *power*. The right hand of God is repeatedly spoken of in the Psalms and prophets, as the instrument by which he saves and sustains the objects of his favour, and by which he overcomes all opposition to his will. The right hand of God is the power, by which he saves the sinner. This hand, or power, he himself speaks of as consisting in his own righteousness, (Is. xli. 10;) and the same right hand is spoken of, Ps. xlviii. 10, as full of righteousness. So we may say, the righteousness of God, imputed to the disciple, is the right hand of God in the exercise of its power to save. The apostle saw, then, in this righteousness or divine power to save, something symbolically represented as a *book*. The book of ancient times being a scroll rolled up, or a roll of scrolls. This sealed book, or roll, is evidently a mystery to be unfolded, or developed; there is a mystery in this righteousness or divine power to save, which is to be explained or laid open. The parchment was written within and without—on both sides—perhaps, it would be enough to say, that it was full; that it contained every thing to be said. This *inside* and *outside*, however, may have a more important meaning; such as an internal or secret sense, and an external or apparent sense. This last construction, seems to correspond best with the whole tenor of the Apocalypse; but, besides the inner and outer sense, this mystery in the righteousness or saving power of God is sealed, concealed, or made close, by seven seals. The verb translated sealed, is compounded with a preposition, giving intensity to the expression. It was sealed with particular care; the number of the seals—seven—may also have reference to the completeness of

this sealing; although, it is probable, this has besides a more definite bearing.

The seal of a letter is that which prevents the contents of the letter from being known. By way of approximation, we may suppose the revelation of the mind of God, as made in the Old and New Testaments, (perhaps the Old Testament alone,) to be the book containing the mystery in question. That which prevents the contents of the book from being *read*, or comprehended, is the types and symbols, or typical and symbolical language in which the book is written. If we suppose in this book seven sets of figures, under which its truths are couched, these sets of figures would be equivalent to seven seals. To obtain a key to the interpretation of these figures, would be equal to obtaining the power of opening these seals; or, whoever opened these seals, might be said to be himself the key for this interpretation.\*

V. 2. And I saw a strong [mighty] angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

Καὶ εἶδον ἄγγελον ἰσχυρόν, κηρύσσοντα ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ· τίς ἐστὶν ἄξιος ἀνοῖξαι τὸ βιβλίον καὶ λύσαι τὰς σφραγίδας αὐτοῦ.

§ 134. The word rendered *strong*, is the same as that translated *mighty*, Rev. x. 1; the latter word seems to be the most appropriate here, as the allusion is not to physical, but to intellectual or moral power. An angel, as we have before had occasion to observe, (§ 4,) is a messenger of some kind. The messenger may be here put for the message itself, or for a ministering spirit acting upon the mind, and exciting to the inquiry—Who is able to interpret this mystery in the power of Divine righteousness? The might of the angel, and the loudness of his voice, may both be intimations of the importance of the inquiry; but the latter may also intimate the extent of the challenge given to the whole universe—Who is equal to the task?—affording, as it were, every possible opportunity to every created being to accept the challenge. Who is worthy? whom does it become? who is qualified? Is there a created being able to do this?—The question, itself, implying that no mere creature is equal to the task.

V. 3. And no man [no one] in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

Καὶ οὐδεὶς ἡδύνατο ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, οὐδὲ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, οὐδὲ ὑποκάτω τῆς γῆς, ἀνοῖξαι τὸ βιβλίον, οὐδὲ βλέπειν αὐτό.

The rendering, in our common version, *no man*, weakens the force of the

\* Perhaps this book might be termed the record of the Divine counsels, as given by Moses, David, and the prophets. The figurative clothing of the Revelation rendering it a sealed book, until the coming of Christ; as the Old Testament was a sealed book until explained by the New Testament. We may term even both Testaments, (the Bible,) a sealed book, till a due exhibition of the offices and work of Christ reveals their true meaning.



expression. The original οὐδείς, *no one*, being applicable to all created beings, whether men or angels. No such being in heaven or earth, of any kind—celestial or terrestrial, spiritual or literal—was able to unfold this mystery, for the benefit of others, or even to look into it for his own understanding. It was, in the strongest sense, a sealed book; although containing things of which it is said, 1 Peter i. 12, the angels (even the messengers of God themselves) desire to look into. Prophets and righteous men desired to understand its contents, and could not, Matt. xiii. 17.

V. 4. And I wept much, because no man [no one] was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

Καὶ ἐγὼ ἔκλαιον πολλά, ὅτι οὐδεὶς ἄξιος εὐρέθη ἀνοῖξαι τὸ βιβλίον οὔτε βλέπειν αὐτό.

*I lamented much*, would be, perhaps, a better rendering; as the original does not necessarily suppose a shedding of tears, which we associate with the term *weep*. The whole scene reminds us of some of the splendid tournaments *formerly* given by sovereigns, as spectacles to their own subjects, and to the representatives of other nations. On these occasions it was customary for a single champion to defy the assembled multitude, to produce an antagonist worthy or capable of competing with him in a trial of strength. The challenge was given by the herald, proclaiming with a loud voice; the whole multitude were in a state of eager anticipation, until the opponent made his appearance. We may easily imagine the disappointment of the assembly, if, after repeated proclamations of the herald, no competitor presented himself. But here, in the sight of the apostle, there was something of far greater interest. In the right hand of divine righteousness, there was the whole mystery of the plan of salvation for fallen man; but no created being was to be found equal to the task of unfolding the wonders of this mystery. Not only this, the apostle knew that, with his fellow-sinners, he had a special interest in the contents of this book—as a criminal under sentence of condemnation, when told of a certain document, showing the mode in which he may be pardoned, is anxious to obtain the written instrument, to read it, or to hear it read; so might the apostle well have felt that anxiety to know the mystery of the book before him; and well might he lament and weep, when no one was to be found capable of making known its precious truths.

V. 5. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

Καὶ εἷς ἐκ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων λέγει μοι· μὴ κλαῖτε· ἰδοὺ, ἐνίκησεν ὁ λέων ὁ ἐκ τῆς φυλῆς Ἰουδα, ἡ ῥίζα Δαυὶδ, ἀνοῖξαι τὸ βιβλίον καὶ τὰς ἐπὶ σφραγίδας αὐτοῦ.

§ 135. The opening required is not a literal, but a virtual opening. Whether the book be the purpose of God itself, or the typical and figurative

account of that purpose, the unsealing is to be effected by *manifestation*—it is to be acted out. The life, the death, the resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, with all that he taught, unfold the *purpose* of God, and thus, if that purpose be the book, open the seals thereof; or, if the figurative revelation of this purpose, given us in the Scriptures, be the sealed book, then it is by bringing the life, death, resurrection, ascension, and doctrines of Jesus to this figurative revelation, that the last becomes the instrument of unlocking the first, or of opening its seals. In the nature of the case, no other being than Christ can perform this work. So, also, no other could look into this purpose of God, to understand it. In him only all the types and figures of the Scriptures are fulfilled, and it is therefore only by him that they can be interpreted, or the seals broken, if these figures be the seals. As he himself said to his disciples, Luke x. 23, 24, “Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see; for I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.”

In an immediate, natural, and external sense, the types and figures of the Old Testament are interpreted by the works and sufferings of Christ, thus laying open, or unfolding the outside of the scroll, (book.) In an ulterior, spiritual, and inner sense, Christ unfolds and exposes to view the inside of the scroll, by exhibiting the doctrinal elements of the mystery of redemption. When he gave sight to blind Bartimeus; when he called Lazarus from the grave; when he fed the multitude with a few loaves and fishes; when scourged, and spit upon, and wounded, he died upon the cross; when his body was committed to the tomb, and when he rose from the dead, the types, and shadows, and prophecies, were literally fulfilled in him, and the *outside* of the book unsealed. When, in a spiritual sense, he anoints the eyes with eye-salve, that the sinner may perceive his own destitution; and opens the understanding, that the disciple may perceive why it was that his Master thus suffered;—when, by adoption in him, the sinner is manifested to be taken out of his natural position of deadness and darkness in trespasses and sins, and to be a new creature in the sight of God, by occupying a position of light and life in Christ;—when, spiritually, he is seen to be the bread of life, because his righteousness or merit is the means of eternal life; and to give the water of life, because, in his atonement, or propitiation, there is that ablution from sin which preserves the soul from perishing;—then he virtually unseals or unfolds the *inside* of the book.

In both these senses the Lamb of God is, in the nature of the case, the only fit and proper instrument for developing the purposes of God. The book written within and without, required a double fitness in the instrument of its development, and this double fitness is found in Christ, and in him alone.

§ 136. ‘One of the elders saith unto me.’—These elders we suppose to represent elements of the old dispensation, or of the revelation comprehending that dispensation. One of these elements performs the part of pointing out Jesus Christ, in the characters here spoken of, (the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and the Root of David,) as the fit and destined instrument of unfolding the mysteries of the book.

Judah is described as a Lion, and his tribe and power as terminating in SHILOH, Gen. xlix. 8–10, Shiloh being an admitted title of the Messiah, or Christ; and Paul refers to the fact as indisputable, Heb. vii. 14, that our Lord sprang out of Judah; while the root of Jesse is applied also to Jesus Christ, Rom. xv. 12.

This is sufficient to identify the personage in question (the Lamb) with Christ, the Saviour; although, in the vision, the revealing of this identity is but commencing. The figure of the lion is probably employed here in reference to the strength of the animal; Christ alone having the strength or ability to develop the mystery in question—mighty to save, and able to reveal. The verb translated *prevailed*, is the same as that elsewhere rendered *overcome*, *conquer*, &c. Christ may be said to have overcome every obstacle in the way of opening this mysterious book; but it appears by the subsequent part of the chapter, that the victory obtained by the Lamb is something else than a triumph merely over difficulties occurring in the explanation of a portion of Scripture. He is declared worthy or fit to perform the work proposed, because he was *slain*, &c., (see 9th verse.) He had therefore *prevailed* by being slain, that is, slaughtered, as a victim offered at the altar; such being the signification of the term in the original, (Rob. Lex. 847.) It was by this sacrifice of himself that he prevailed, or was qualified to open the book. In effect it is by his vicarious work of redemption that Christ unseals, or develops the divine plan of mercy. We must judge of the nature of the contest, by the means through which the victory is obtained. Christ died for our sins, and was raised for our justification; the contest, therefore, in which he was engaged, must have been with the elements of infinite justice; these alone rendering the intervention of such a champion in behalf of the sinner indispensable.

V. 6. And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, [living animals.] and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

Καὶ εἶδον ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ τῶν τεσσάρων ζώων καὶ ἐν μέσῳ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων ἄρνιον ἐστηγὸς ὡς ἐσφαγμένος, ἔχον κέρατα ἑπτὰ καὶ ὀφθαλμοὺς ἑπτὰ, οἳ εἰσι τὰ ἑπτὰ πνεύματα τοῦ θεοῦ, τὰ ἀπεσταλμένα εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν.

§ 137. ‘And I beheld, and lo,’—καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ, according to some editions, instead of καὶ εἶδον, ‘and I saw,’ as above. The difference is unimportant, except that the first form may express a greater change of



scene, than is implied in the last. Here, there is no change of scenery ; the apostle's eyes only being directed to an object in the assembly not before noticed, although previously there—even from the beginning.

‘ In the midst of,’ &c.—The element of propitiation exists, and is to be found in the midst of the element of divine sovereignty, (the throne,) and of the four attributes of Deity, the four living creatures. It is also to be found revealed amidst the twenty-four elements of the old dispensation—the revelation set forth by the patriarchs and prophets, (1 Peter, i. 10–12,) or perhaps in the midst of both dispensations, if we prefer considering the twenty-four elders as figures of the patriarchs and apostles, (§ 121.)

‘ A Lamb as it had been slain.’—The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world, John i. 29 and 36 ; the paschal Lamb, (1 Cor. v. 7 ;) the Lamb without blemish and without spot, 1 Pet. i. 19 ; even He who was brought as a Lamb to the slaughter, (Is. liii. 7.)

‘ As it had been slain.’—Not precisely in the condition of a *slain lamb*, for then it would have been lying down and prostrate, (Rob. Lex. 847, art. *ὥς*;) but as if it had been slain, and afterwards restored to life. So Jesus appeared before his disciples, John xx. 26, 27, as one having been crucified, when he exhibited to the unbelieving Thomas the marks of the nails on his hands and feet, and the wound in his side.

‘ Slain,’—slaughtered as a victim. The lamb contemplated by the apostle appeared to have been once offered in sacrifice. Under the old economy, Ex. xxix. 39, a continual daily sacrifice was required of one lamb in the morning, and another in the evening ; but Christ, having once offered himself, no further sacrifice is required. Under the old economy, too, the Lamb offered was entirely eaten or consumed ; there was nothing left of it. Lamb after lamb was called for, and justice still remained unappeased ; but when the Lamb of God was offered, the sacrifice was more than sufficient. The Lamb had performed its vicarious work, and yet remained *standing*, living,—bearing only the marks of what it had endured. So, as Jesus died for our sins, he was raised to *manifest* our justification ; for if Christ be not raised, says Paul, we are yet in our sins, (1 Cor. xv. 17.)

‘ Having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are,’ &c.—One horn and one eye to each spirit—a horn being a figure of power, and the eye that of intelligence. The horns of an animal are its weapons of offence and defence ; and the opening of the eyes of understanding is spoken of, Eph. i. 17 and 18, as particularly an operation of the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ.

‘ The seven Spirits,’—we may presume to be the seven described, Rev. i. 4, that is, the Holy Spirit,—taking seven as a figure of totality, (§ 9.) On this occasion, the horns and eyes may be noticed with special reference to the work about to be performed. The Lamb presents himself as the

champion,—the only champion capable of undertaking the performance calling for the exercise of his strength. He makes his appearance with the weapons peculiarly requisite for the trial to be encountered ;—the seals of a certain book are to be opened ;—a Lamb once slain is to accomplish this task ; and besides his general fitness for the work, as having been slain, or sacrificed, his implements are seven powers, and seven means of understanding, comprehended in the one power and one mean of the Spirit of truth—the Spirit destined to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment ; and at the same time to testify of Jesus—teaching his followers all things, and bringing all things to their remembrance. The book had seven seals, and the opener of the book appeared with the seven Spirits of God. We are not told whether to each seal the operation of a particular Spirit is to be applied ; or whether the seven Spirits are equally engaged in opening each seal. Perhaps some light may be thrown upon this hereafter.

§ 138. ‘Sent forth into all the earth.’—The earth, as an opposite of heaven, we suppose to be figuratively the exhibition of a plan of salvation, —a view of the position of man in his relation to God,—the opposite of the exhibition symbolically spoken of as heaven. This earth is to be a scene of trial, apocalyptically ; a test is to be applied to it, and certain *wocs* are pronounced against its dependents ; these Spirits going forth into all the earth, (or this Holy Spirit, as a totality,) are to be the instruments of carrying the anticipated trial into effect. Perhaps we may say these seven Spirits each furnish a spiritual understanding, peculiar to each seal, and capable of developing its meaning ; this understanding being consistent in every case with that by which the whole volume of revealed truth has been dictated. This same standard of interpretation, applied to the *earthly* exhibition before spoken of, is to be the means of detecting its errors, and exposing its fallacies. The same searching element as that elsewhere compared to a two-edged sword ; as it is said, The eyes of the Lord are in every place, (Prov. xv. 3 ;) His eyes behold, his eyelids try the children of men, Ps. xi. 4. This is literally and spiritually true ; in the latter sense the action is equivalent to that of the seven Spirits apocalyptically going forth into all the earth.

Vs. 7, 8. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts, and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints.

Καὶ ἦλθε καὶ εἴληψε τὸ βιβλίον ἐκ τῆς δεξιᾶς τοῦ καθήμενον ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου. Καὶ ὅτε ἔλαβε τὸ βιβλίον, τὰ τέσσαρα ζῶα καὶ οἱ εἰκοσιτέσσαρες πρεσβύτεροι ἔπεσαν ἐνώπιον τοῦ ἁγίου, ἔχοντες ἕναστος καθάρια καὶ γαῖλας χροῦσας θυμιαμάτων, αἱ εἰσιν αἱ προσευχαὶ τῶν ἁγίων.

‘And he came and took the book.’—There is a parity of circumstance

between this passage and that of Ps. xl. 7, 8, referred to Heb. x. 7, 9, "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book (it is) written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." This may be the same book as that in the hand of him that sat on the throne, the volume of divine purpose. Christ virtually takes this book by fulfilling this purpose: He unseals it, by bringing about the comparison of what he has done with what was predicted of him; and we may add, with what was predicated of him in the mind of the Sovereign Ruler from all eternity.

'Out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.'—The right hand of God, as we have elsewhere noticed, is a figure especially of his righteousness—the power by the intervention of which the salvation of the sinner is effected. This righteousness furnishes the plan or purpose which grows out of it, or emanates from it, as the particle  $\epsilon\kappa$  implies—the Son of God, the express Image of the Father, and consequently the representative of his righteousness, takes this book, or plan, fulfils its prescription, and develops its meaning, when he interposes himself, with all the divine righteousness of which he is the image or symbol, in behalf of those whom he came to seek and to save. The righteousness is that of him who alone possesses the attribute of perfect sovereignty; the book contains the plan, or purpose, by which this righteousness is rendered the efficient means of salvation; this purpose is fulfilled, and the plan developed by him, who, though he was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might become rich.

§ 139. 'And when he had taken the book,' &c.—According to the preceding chapter, (Rev. iv. 9,) the adoration of the four living creatures gives occasion to the prostration of the twenty-four elders. Here, the taking of the book by the Lamb, or the undertaking of the development of its mysteries, produces the prostration both of the living creatures and of the elders.

'Fell down before the Lamb.'—Those, that before fell down before Him that sat on the throne, now fall down before him who takes the book from the hand of the former object of adoration; "All these things," said Satan, "will I give thee, if thou wilt *fall down* and worship me." "Get thee hence, Satan," was the reply of the Lamb of God himself; "for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve;" and yet, here we find the four elements of divine sovereignty, and the twenty-four elements of divine revelation, prostrating themselves before the Lamb. We can only reconcile this apparent inconsistency, by recognizing the identity of the two personifications; at the same time, the particle *when*, calls our attention to the peculiarity, that it is just at this juncture, when the Lamb presents himself to open the book, that he is recognized as identic with him to whom alone divine honours are due:—the prostration



of the living creatures, and of the elders, being equivalent to an admission, that the sovereign on the throne was then manifest in the Lamb.

‘Having every one of them harps.’—The harp was especially used, amongst the Hebrews, in offerings of praise and acts of rejoicing. It is mentioned by the afflicted patriarch, (Job xxx. 31,) as an exception to the general rule, that his harp was turned to mourning. So the Israelites, when in captivity, hanged, as they said, their harps upon the willows. David sang the praises of God, as the God of his salvation, upon the harp; and we may presume, from Ps. xlix. 4, that he sang also, in figurative language, the wonders of redeeming love. Such we may suppose to be the use of the harps in possession of the living creatures and of the elders.

Our common version conveys the impression that the vials only were of gold, but the adjective rendered *golden*, agrees in the original with harps, as well as with vials:—“having each harps and vials golden,” &c. These harps, therefore, are instruments of truth; their material, or composition, being such as to withstand any test administered to them;—corresponding with which, David says, Ps. lxxi. 22, “I will praise thee with the psaltery, (even) thy *truth*, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the *harp*.” The publication of *the truth as it is in Jesus*, being in effect an ascription of praise to God, as it is a setting forth of the cause for which he is to be praised; thus the Gospel itself may be compared to a golden harp, as an instrument of truth, by which the praise due to Jehovah is virtually set forth.

‘And golden vials full of odours,’ &c.,—or, as the original might be rendered, *laden with incense*; the Greek *θυμίαμα*, being rendered also elsewhere, *incense*, as we shall have occasion to notice hereafter. The offering of incense, under the Levitical arrangement, was a representation of *sacrifice*, generally. Here these odours (incense) are said to be the prayers of the saints. We presume the offering to be rather that of praise and thanksgiving, than of the character of a petition: as we find from 1 Tim. ii. 1, the term *προσευχαί*, rendered, in our common version, prayers, to be synonymous neither with supplications nor intercessions. The season of *petition* may now be supposed to have passed away. The Lamb had been slain, and was again living—He had redeemed his people—He had taken the book to develope its mysteries—the aspirations of the universe were complied with, and that which prophets and kings had been so desirous of seeing and hearing, was being made known. The supplications of Daniel, the prayers of David, the urgent entreaties of the prophets, were *ended*, and had been complied with; in heaven, at least, the tribute of gratitude, the voice of praise and thanksgiving only, is to be heard. Such, we suppose, to be the tribute of praise represented by these odours; the action of the scene shadowing forth that period of glorious manifestation, when those most remote, being brought nigh by the blood of Christ, shall bring gold and

incense, and shall show forth the praises of God, Is. lx. 6. The material of these vials was also of gold; the truth of God being the instrument of exhibiting the sacrifice of gratitude offered by his redeemed.

Vs. 9, 10. "And they sung a new song, saying, 'Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.'

Καὶ ᾄδουσιν ὁδὴν καινὴν, λέγοντες· ἄξιός ἐστι λαβεῖν τὸ βιβλίον καὶ ἀνοῖξαι τὰς σφραγίδας αὐτοῦ· ὅτι ἐσφάγης, καὶ ἡγόμασθα τῷ Θεῷ ἡμῶς ἐν τῇ αἱματί σου ἐκ πάσης φυλῆς καὶ γλώσσης καὶ λαοῦ καὶ ἔθρους, καὶ ἐποίησας αὐτοὺς τῷ Θεῷ ἡμῶν βασιλεῖς καὶ ἱερεῖς, καὶ βασιλεύσουσιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

§ 140. 'And they sung a new song.'—The old song, apparently, was the ascription of praise rendered the Supreme Being, as the creator and sovereign of all things, (Rev. iv. 9–11;) "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." The *new ode*, or song, is the song of redemption—the ascription of praise, by the same four living creatures and twenty-four elders, to the same object of worship, as the Redeemer—the Lamb.

'Thou art worthy,' &c.—We have already remarked upon the fitness of Christ for developing the divine purpose, from the fact of his having wrought out that purpose by his sufferings and vicarious sacrifice; by which, indeed, he becomes in effect the instrument of this development, (§ 135.)

'And hast redeemed us to God,' &c.—This is the language of the four living creatures, and of the twenty-four elders; not that the work of Christ had no other object than this, but that this is the subject under consideration here. The elements of truth, represented by these living creatures and elders, have been redeemed from amidst all other elements. The same elements of truth and revelation which set forth the sovereignty of God, from the fact of his having created all things, set forth also the praise due Him for his free act of mercy, as exhibited in the work of redemption.

'And hast made *us* kings and priests: and *we* shall reign on the earth.'—Here there is a difference in the Greek editions; some of them, as that of which we are making use, read, as it will be observed, "and hast made *them* kings and priests; and *they* shall reign." According to this rendering, we must suppose the living creatures and the elders to be speaking in this verse of the saints, whose prayers filled the golden vials, although they were speaking of themselves in the preceding verse. Or, if we suppose the *new song* to constitute what is called "the prayers of the saints," then the saints would speak of themselves as redeemed, and of the four living creatures and twenty-four elders, as constituted kings and priests. We cannot, otherwise, account for the employment of the pronoun *us* in one case, and *them* in the other. The rendering of the common version is probably the

most correct ; the living creatures and the elders being the kings and priests alluded to in this song of praise.

As we have elsewhere noticed, the term rendered kings, is sometimes used to denote those who preside over sacred things. The terms, king and priest, may thus be, *apocalyptically*, nearly equivalents. These elements, or principles are rendered, by the work of redemption, ruling principles—predominating over all others, as kings, and as chiefs, which the term likewise signifies—bringing their respective forces or subordinate principles into the service of God ;—as priests, they promote and maintain the true worship in his temple, in the spiritual sense in which we have already defined that worship. This predominating influence over all the elements of the earthly system, we suppose to be alluded to in the expression, “and *we* shall reign on the earth.”

Vs. 11, 12. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts [the living creatures] and the elders : and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands ; saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἤκουσα γοῶν ἁγγέλων πολλῶν κύκλῳ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ τῶν ζώων καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων· καὶ ἦν ὁ ἁριθμὸς αὐτῶν μυριάδες μυριάδων καὶ χιλιάδες χιλιάδων, λέγοντες γοῶν μεγάλη· ἄξιόν ἐστι τὸ ἅγιον τὸ ἐσφαγμένον λαβεῖν τὴν δύναμιν καὶ πλοῦτον καὶ σοφίαν καὶ ἰσχὺν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ δόξαν καὶ ἐνδοξίαν.

§ 141 ‘I beheld, and heard the voice of many angels round about,’ &c.—These angels, messengers, or ministering spirits, are all in some sense connected with, or dependent upon the throne, the principle of sovereignty, or that which exhibits the sovereignty of God. Like the four living creatures and elders, we suppose them to be subordinate principles, truths, or elements of truth—innumerable, indeed, but all virtually, or in effect, ascribing worthiness to the Lamb. Perhaps, as attendants of, or about the throne, they may be said to ascribe this worthiness to him more particularly, because it is by his work of redemption that the sovereignty of God is most fully exhibited.

‘Saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches,’ &c.—This is an ascription of homage in addition to that of the four living creatures and twenty-four elders. The words *beasts* and *elders*, in the 11th verse, being governed in the Greek by κύκλῳ, about, and not by γοῶν, voice—many angels round about the throne, and *about* the beasts and the elders. The throng of angels do not say that they are made kings and priests, but they say that the Lamb is worthy to receive, or rather to take power ; they may be viewed in the light of a *chorus*. This immense multitude of the heavenly host, being put for the whole, as in the 13th verse, every creature in heaven and in earth, is represented as uttering nearly the same language. Corresponding with the statement of Paul,



(Phil. ii. 9-11,) “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

‘To receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.’—Here, seven particulars or attributes are enumerated; we may presume, not without possessing some peculiar allusion;—perhaps they may have a relation to the seven horns of the Lamb, considering those horns in the light of crowns; as Jesus is said, Heb. ii. 9, to be crowned with glory and honour. The receiving power, &c., we suppose to be put for receiving the ascription of it. The work of the Lamb had been already accomplished, the only question remaining to be solved being this: By whose power, by whose riches, by whose wisdom, and by whose strength, has this been accomplished? and to whom do the honour, and glory, and blessing belong? to him, or to some other being? The united testimony of this multitude show that these belong to him—that he is entitled to take all the merit and the praise, for the means are his, and the work has been his; while nearly the same ascription being given to *him that sat on the throne*, Rev. iv. 11, we cannot do otherwise than consider the two Beings as identic. The power, we may suppose, to be especially the power of God unto salvation—the propitiation of Christ; the riches, those durable riches, which furnish the ransom of the sinner; the wisdom, that by which justice and mercy have been reconciled; the strength, that of divine righteousness;—all these are means employed in the work of man’s salvation, and the honour, glory, and blessing, incident to the successful result of this employment, can be ascribed only to Christ, as the Lord, Jehovah our righteousness—God manifest in the flesh.

V. 13. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, (be) unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.

Καὶ πᾶν κτίσμα ὃ ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ὑποκάτω τῆς γῆς, καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης ἅ ἐστι, καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς πάντα, ἤκουσα λέγοντας· τῷ καθήμενῳ ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ τῷ ἁγίῳ ἢ ἐνδοξία καὶ ἡ τιμὴ καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

§ 142. ‘And every creature,’ &c.—The very universality of this ascription of praise, shows us that its utterance is to be taken in some qualified sense; as we say, all creation continually uttereth the praise of the Lord. But, to be more exact, we repeat what we have before said, that to set forth the cause of praise, is virtually to praise. The wonders of creation set forth the cause of praise to the Creator, and thus in effect praise him; as it is said, Ps. cxlviii. 7-10, “Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons

and all deeps : fire, and hail ; snow, and vapour : stormy wind fulfilling his word : mountains, and all hills ; fruitful trees, and all cedars : beasts, and all cattle ; creeping things, and flying fowl." So, Ps. cxlv. 10, " All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord ! " In like manner, the elements of the economy of redemption, with all the principles subordinate to it—of the law, as well as of the Gospel—of condemnation, as well as of justification—all tend to exhibit the *cause* of praise, in the character and operation of sovereign grace, and thus in effect praise the Lord.

‘Unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.’—The peculiarity to be noticed here is, that the adoration described in this verse is represented as offered to two objects ; whereas, in the previous accounts, the ascription of praise is rendered to one of these objects alone. Prior to the taking of the book by the Lamb, the four living creatures are represented as ascribing holiness perpetually to the Almighty God—which ascription is responded to by the prostration and homage of the twenty-four elders. After the taking of the book, the same living creatures and the same elders prostrate themselves before the Lamb, singing the new song ; and after this, the angels encircling the throne, and encircling the beasts and the elders, offer their homage, apparently as a response to the *new song*. And finally, this ascription of praise is offered, by all created beings, to God and the Lamb jointly ; which homage to these two objects, as we find from the next verse, is responded to by the Amen of the living creatures ; showing us, that whatever apparent difference there may have been in the objects of the preceding acts of adoration, there is a perfect unanimity of purpose in all engaged in them.

We have here three several and successive acts of worship, each consisting of two parts—the offering and the response—the first before God, the second before Christ, and the third before God and Christ. The last bringing, as it were, the two preceding acts of worship into one ; and thus preparing us for the final exhibition of that adoration which is due to the one Supreme God ; that is, identifying the Lamb with Him that sits upon the throne, that there may appear thenceforth not two objects of worship, but one only.

V. 14. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

Καὶ τὰ τέσσαρα ζῶα ἔλεγον· ἀμήν· καὶ οἱ προεβύττεροι ἔπεσαν καὶ προσεκύνησαν.

§ 143. ‘And the four beasts said, Amen.’—This may be viewed as the last clause of the preceding verse, and would probably have been better so divided. Every living creature was heard to say, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever ; and the four living creatures said, Amen,—So let it be.

The elements of divine sovereignty, or the elements of truth sustaining the principles of God's sovereignty, are here represented as according to the Lamb, a coequality with him that sitteth on the throne; that is, according to the Son, a coequality with the Father—conceding to the Lamb a participation in that homage which can be due only to sovereignty.

The word *be*, in the 13th verse, as rendered in our common version, is supplied. There is no verb in the original in its place, and we have as good a right to supply the verb *belong*, as *be*. The language of the ascription may be considered declarative of a fact already existing, not of something that is to be. Adopting the order of the Greek, the passage may be thus read, "Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, *belong*, for ever and ever; and the four living creatures said, *Amen*."

'And the four and twenty elders fell down, and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.'—Neither Him on the throne, nor the Lamb, are here mentioned; but in the place of these two objects of adoration one alone is presented, *the Ever-living*. The inference is unavoidable, that this *Ever-living* comprehends the two others; God and the Lamb have been exhibited, first, as each entitled to honour; secondly, to be honoured coequally and jointly. They are now spoken of as *identic*; the Sovereign on the throne and the Lamb constituting the eternal God; the element of sovereignty and the element of propitiation coalescing in the exhibition here made of the divine character.

There is some difference, however, in the Greek editions, as to this text; that from which we copy omits the words rendered *him that liveth for ever and ever*; reading only, "And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped;" that is, they worshipped Him that sitteth upon the throne, and the Lamb; thus joining, by their action, in the *Amen* of the four living creatures, according coequal honours to the two objects in contemplation. The difference is not material, for we have the positive testimony of both the Old and New Testaments, that there are not two objects of worship,—that there cannot be more than one; and that this one will not divide his glory with another. Consequently, if the Sovereign on the throne and the Lamb be both objects of homage and adoration, they must be *identic*; the apparent difference between them being only assumed for the temporary purpose of illustration. The whole process of the manifestation exhibited in this, and the last chapter, corresponding with that described by Paul as resulting in the giving up of the kingdom by the Son unto the Father, that God may be all in all, 1 Cor. xv. 24–28.



## RETROSPECT.

§ 144. It will be perceived that the principal scope of this chapter is to show the peculiar worthiness of the Lamb; that is, his fitness to open the *sealed book*:—this fitness arising from his having been slain, or offered in sacrifice; from his having accomplished the work of redemption; and from the fact of his being coequal, and consequently identic, with the divine occupant of the throne.

The Lamb, as it appears, is known to have been slain, and to be entitled to divine honours prior to the opening of the book. These facts simply, therefore, do not constitute the mystery of the book; but the book, we may presume, contains particulars (the exhibition of truths and principles) connected with these facts, which connection constitutes the peculiar qualification of the Lamb for opening the book. The book we suppose to represent a mystery; and this mystery to be the purpose of God, in the work of redemption—Christ, as the *word*, or *wisdom* of God, is fully cognizant of this purpose; while, as the Redeemer, he has wrought it out, or carried it into effect; he is therefore the proper instrument, and the only proper instrument of its development.

The Revelation, or Apocalypse, now being made, corresponds, we apprehend, with that made to Paul, and to the holy apostles and prophets: “the *mystery*, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ,” Eph. iii. 3–9. This mystery, preached by Paul and the other apostles, and spoken of in dark sayings by the Psalmist and by the prophets, was exemplified, illustrated, and carried out by Jesus Christ, while in the flesh; but there is a spiritual meaning attached to all that he did, and taught, and suffered; which meaning he unfolds (through the medium of this Apocalypse) in the person of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. Speaking of himself as the Lamb, and of the economy, or mystery of redemption, as the Holy City, or Bride; both together constituting that eternal purpose of God, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, κατὰ πρόθεσιν τῶν αἰώνων, ἣν ἐποίησεν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν, Eph. iii. 11.\*

\* The word πρόθεσις, rendered purpose in this passage, expresses something more than a mere latent design. It is a purpose set forth, or the setting forth of a purpose. In Latin, *propositio*, i. e., *ea argumentationis pars, per quam summatim ostendimus quid sit quod probaturi sumus*, (Suiceri. Lex.) That part of an argument in which we set forth summarily what we are about to prove: applied to the mystery of redemption, it directs our attention to the *shew-bread*, ἄρτοι προθέσεως,

Thus far, however, we have only seen the Lamb taking the sealed book; a knowledge of its contents is to be gathered from the subsequent chapters. In this stage of the representation, the spectacle presented for our contemplation is that of the whole array of the heavenly assembly, described both in this and in the preceding chapter. The throne, the sovereign upon the throne, or rather one representing that sovereign; for the apostle appears expressly to avoid speaking of the Deity as himself seen. The rainbow above, the seven lamps, and the sea of glass, are all before the throne; while the twenty-four elders round about the throne, and the four living creatures in the midst and round about the throne, are singing the *new song*. An outer circle of myriads and myriads of angels are offering their tribute of adoration to the Lamb, and all in heaven and earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, are ascribing praise to him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb; to which ascription the four living creatures respond their *Amen*, while the twenty-four elders also responsively prostrate themselves in the act of adoration.

Such is the appearance (wonderful as it is) which may be said to be presented by the *background* of the picture,—a representation of the operation of elements of truth, existing from all eternity.

In the foreground, in front of this assembly, and in the midst of these hallelujahs of every living thing, the LAMB (the Champion) is seen, having seven horns, and seven eyes, possessed of the book, and about to open the seals thereof. The process of this opening, with the several exhibitions consequent to the breaking of each seal, constitutes the remaining action of this mystic drama; interrupted occasionally by the introduction of a chorus, or the voice of some friendly interpreter, attending the apostle, the only privileged mortal permitted to enjoy the spectacle. Thus privileged, however, as we find from his own testimony, for the sake of those for whose edification he is directed to commit to writing an account of the extraordinary scenes passing before his eyes. But the apostle is not

*panes propositionis*; or, according to Hebrews ix. 2, the setting forth of the bread, ἡ πρόθεσις τοῦ ἄρτου. Christ is the bread of life, because the righteousness of God represented in him, and through him imputed to the believer, constitutes the means of eternal life. The means and mode of application constitute the eternal purpose of the Divine mind; this purpose being *set forth* in Christ. Such, we think, is the sense of the text quoted from Ephesians; and this *proposition*, or setting forth, in its most spiritual sense, we suppose to be the design of the Apocalypse. The shew-bread, Christ in the flesh, and this mystic vision, all concurring in the same exhibition of that divine purpose, or plan of sovereign mercy, which we sometimes denominate the economy of grace: “the bride,” or “wife” of Christ, because identical with him—“the mother of us all,” because by this means we become the children of God.

to be considered the only witness taking an interest in the representation. The immense assemblage, just now described, constitutes itself an innumerable multitude of spectators. A portion of the heavenly host are sometimes represented as taking part in the scenes exhibited ; but whether actually engaged or not, the whole multitude, with the elders and the living creatures, must be supposed to be anticipating the several developments with eager expectation, and to be contemplating the scenes presented with the most intense interest.



## CHAPTER VI.

## THE SEALS OPENED.

V. 1. And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts, [living creatures,] saying, Come and see.

Καὶ εἶδον ὅτε ἤνοιξε τὸ ἄρτιον μίαν ἐκ τῶν ἐπὶ τὰ σφραγίδων, καὶ ἤκουσα ἑνὸς ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων ζώων λέγοντος, ὡς φωνὴ βροντῆς· ἔρχου.

§ 145. ‘I SAW when the Lamb opened the *first* of the seven seals, and I heard the *first* of the four living creatures, as *with a voice* of thunder, saying, Come.’—The words *μίαν* and *ἑνὸς*, used in our common version as numerals, if compared with what is said of the opening of the other seals, appear intended here as ordinals, (Rob. Lex. art. *εἰς*, 194 ;) and if the words *καὶ βλέπε*, or *καὶ ἴδε*, found in some editions after *ἔρχου*, are correctly omitted, as above, the word *come* appears as a command issued, not to the spectators, but to the object about to exhibit itself—somewhat in the style of incantation—which idea seems reasonable ; as it would be apparently unnecessary to invite or bid the assembly of spectators to come and see, since they are all supposed to be waiting impatiently for the opening of the seals.

The first living creature was like a lion, and it is at his instance that the object about to present itself, on the opening of the first seal, comes forth, or is exhibited, with a call, perhaps, upon the attention of the spectators. This first animal we suppose to be the element of divine justice—speaking, as we may say, in a voice of thunder—reminding us of the thunderings of Sinai : the action of this element is to call forth, or to exhibit that which is about to appear. It being understood throughout, that the Lamb, which had been slain, is the efficient cause of this, and of all the subsequent exhibitions ; the voice *calling forth*, being a secondary cause.

V. 2. And I saw, and behold, a white horse : and he that sat on him had a bow ; and a crown was given unto him : and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδὼν ἵππος λευκός, καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπ’ αὐτὸν ἔχων τόξον· καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ στέφανος, καὶ ἐξῆλθε νικῶν καὶ ἵνα νικῇ.

§ 146. ‘A white horse.’—The horse of Scripture is generally the war-horse, distinguished for its adaptedness to the purposes either of combat or escape. The warrior of old depended greatly upon his horse, whether in charging an enemy, or in sustaining the shock of an attack ; so, in case of

defeat, his trust was equally in his horse. This we find to be the case still in Eastern countries ; as it was the case in Christendom in the days of chivalry, till the use of gunpowder, and the introduction of artillery, changed the whole character of military warfare. A horse is thus a scriptural figure of means of dependence for salvation—earthly means, such as one's own merits or righteousnesses—means of which the human mind is prone to glory. "A horse," it is said, Ps. xxxiii. 17, "is a vain thing for safety : neither shall he deliver any by his great strength ;" and Is. xxxi. 1, "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help, and stay (or depend) on horses, and trust in chariots." Here, horses are used as in a bad sense ; but we find by the third verse of the same chapter, that there are two kinds of these animals : "The Egyptians," the prophet says, "are men, and not God ; and *their horses flesh, and not spirit.*" The spiritual horse is a very different being from the animal of which man makes his boast ; when God furnishes the charger and gives power to the rider, it is no vain preparation for battle ; and then, indeed, the neck of the animal may be said to be "clothed with thunder," (Job xxxix. 19.) So, too, God's provision for escaping the wrath to come, is no vain thing for safety.

The apocalyptic horse now exhibited, is the opposite of the Egyptian horse—it is spirit, and not flesh. It is God's means of contending with the elements of legal condemnation—the means furnished by him for contest, or escape—a horse is the sustaining power of the combatant. The sustaining power of him who has to contend with the elements of legal condemnation, is righteousness, or moral perfection ; the only sufficient power in such a conflict being a *perfect righteousness*. This element of justification, as we have before had occasion to observe, is alluded to in the Apocalypse, under the figure of something *white* ;—the *white* horse thus represents the sustaining power of divine righteousness, as it is promised, Is. xli. 10, "Fear not, for I am with thee : be not dismayed, for I am thy God : I will strengthen thee ; yea, I will help thee ; yea, I will uphold (sustain) thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

We find no other mention of a white horse in the Revelation, except in chap. xix. 11–21, where the apostle says, "And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a *white horse* ; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True,"—πιστός καὶ ἀληθινός ; and where it is expressly declared of the rider, that his name is called the WORD OF GOD, ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ. The two descriptions are so nearly alike, as to lead us to infer that the rider is the same in both cases. The warrior in the first case is seen to go forth to the battle ; in the last case, he is contemplated as already triumphant in victory. If this supposition be correct, the champion here represented is the *Logos*, Christ, as the Word of God, sustained by his own righteousness ; as it is said, Isaiah lix. 16, "He saw that there was no man, and wondered

that there was no intercessor : therefore, his arm brought salvation unto him ; and his righteousness, it sustained him."

§ 147. ' And he that sat on him had a bow ;'—*τόξον*, a bow. The term occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, but it is the same as that applied in the Septuagint translations of the Old Testament to the rainbow, when its appearance was assigned to Noah, as a token of reconciliation and peace with God ;—Gen. ix. 13, " I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth." The spiritual rainbow we have already contemplated as a display of the combination of the imputed righteousness and the atonement of Christ, (§ 120.) The Gospel exhibition of these combined elements affording the assurance of the reconciliation of an offended God with his rebellious creature man : with this *bow*, comprehending, as it may, the whole economy of salvation, the *Logos*, or Word of God, goes forth to overcome the requisitions of the law—to manifest the superiority of Christ's merits over all other pretensions, and to establish his own glory.\*

\* It is said, (Rob. Lex. p. 417.) of the term *logos*, as employed John i. 1-14 :—" The word *λόγος* is used in a manner altogether peculiar, to express that which the writer believed to be divine in the character of Jesus, and united with his human nature. But why the apostle was led to employ, for this purpose, the word *λόγος*, in preference to any other, has never yet been satisfactorily shown, nor have we the means of determining with certainty."

This is treating the subject somewhat cavalierly, as if the apostle had not been divinely directed in the use of his words ; and as if their use in one place had no reference to their employment in other places, by the same writer.

Perhaps, we may come at some approximation to the reason in question, by considering, that as the word, or speech, of a man indicates the decision of his mind, so the term *logos*, or word, in Scripture may indicate the decision of the mind of Deity, —His decree, his fiat, his fixed purpose. It is said of the Almighty, he *spake*, and it was done ; he commanded, and it stood fast: No one supposes an action of speech to be literally understood here. It is enough that God wills, and all things are done. He is unchangeable, too ; His will must have been from everlasting. The enunciation of that will, however, may be said to consist in the act of fulfilling it. The purpose of God in the creation of this world, must have been the same in all eternity ; but the enunciation of this purpose did not take place till the purpose itself was fulfilled in the work of creation. The exercise of power in the act of creation, being equivalent to such an enunciation of the purpose ; it is thus figuratively spoken of as an act of *speech*, bearing some analogy to the announcing of human purposes by an action of the voice. The expression of purpose *in words*, is man's speech—the *act of performance*, is God's speech. With man, however, the exercise of various organs of the body is required to carry out his purposes. The limbs of man are the instruments for executing his will—with God, the *will* itself is the *power* by which his purposes are executed. As the mind of a man is the power acting immediately upon the organs of his own body, so the mind or will of God is the power acting immediately upon every element of the universe, material or immaterial. With God, it would be impossible to separate the mind or will from the decision of



The use of the bow implies the use of arrows. The bow is the instrument of impulsion, but the arrows are the immediate instruments of inflicting the wound ;—the arrows of the Word, or *Logos*, carry conviction to the heart of the sinner—not only a conviction of his sin, but also that of the utter worthlessness of his self-righteous pretensions ; as alluded to by the royal penitent, Ps. xxxviii. 1, 2, “ O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath ; neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. For thine *arrows* stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore.” So the same arrows, or emanations of truth, parting from the covenant or economy of grace, are the instruments of overcoming those false principles, or doctrines, the tendency of which is to deprive the Redeemer of his glory, and of his right to reign ; as is implied in the address of David, in spirit, to this same conqueror, on his going forth : “ Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O Most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty, and in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness ; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things : thine *arrows* (are) sharp in the heart of the kings’s enemies ; the people fall under them,” —the king’s enemies being the principles hostile to his reign, (Ps. xlv. 3–5.)

The power of this covenant-bow may be illustrated by what has been related of the success of certain missionaries amongst the Greenlanders.

the mind or will ; so, as the word of a man is equal to the decision of his mind, the Word of God is equivalent not only to the decision of his mind, but to the mind itself. Hence the divine mind may be properly spoken of as the *λόγος*, word, or speech, of God—the mind or volition of God, manifested in the works of creation, providence, and redemption. In Christ, the divine mind or purpose, especially in reference to the work of redemption, appeared as having its seat in one like unto the *Son of man*. The *Word* was made flesh, was manifested in the flesh ; at the same time, it did not cease to be manifest also in all the works of creation, and in all the operations of an *overruling Providence*.

As the volition, decision, or decree of the mind of God, is the power by which he acts, and as this decision is what is sometimes in Scripture called the *Logos*, we see, from the nature of its operations, that this mind, or *Logos*, must be the same power as that at other times spoken of as the HOLY SPIRIT. The purpose of the divine mind, *setting apart* a certain being as substituted in Christ, or *setting apart* any created thing for a peculiar purpose, being the *sanctification* of that being, or thing. As this *setting apart* in Christ, is also spoken of under the figure of *adoption*, and as the purpose of God, exercised in adoption, is identical with the same purpose exercised in sanctification, the *power* or *word* must be the same in both cases. The difference being in the figure, or manner of speaking of the things, and not in the things themselves. So election, according to the foreknowledge of God, involving predestination, can be nothing else than the same *word*, fiat, or purpose of God, setting apart or adopting from all eternity, the subjects of his favour. The Spirit or power of Christ, in the vicarious act of substitution, being but the same purpose or will of God under another figure. An illustration of the truth of the observation, that several figures may be employed to represent the same truth without perplexity, but one figure cannot represent several truths without hazard of confusion.—(Vid. Faber on the Prophecies.)

That people had long been familiar with Christianity in the ordinary acceptation of the term; they had had preachers who set before them the moral requisitions of revealed religion, the certainty of a future judgment, and the fearful consequences of the wrath of the Most High; but it was not till the atonement or propitiation of Christ was presented to their minds, as the merciful provision of God for convicted sinners, that their hearts were affected, and the stubborn pride of self-sufficiency yielded to the kind invitations of the Gospel. Such we may suppose to be the shafts from the bow of him who sat upon the white horse. The bow, it is true, would be useless without the arrows, but these last owe their power and efficiency to the bow in the hands of him who wields it. But there is still another construction of the use of this bow and its arrows. If the contest between this champion and his enemies, be that of the power of intercession with the power of legal condemnation, the shafts, or arrows, are those truths emanating from the principle of propitiation which destroy the elements of self-justification or legality, spoken of in the Psalms as the enemies of the king.

§ 148. ‘And a crown was given to him.’—Of the rider on the white horse, mentioned in the 19th chapter, it is said that he had many crowns; but those crowns are diadems, (*διαδήματα*.) The one crown here spoken of, is the token of success; the laurel of victory, (*στέφανος*.) It is said, 1 Kings xx. 11, “Let not him that girdeth on his harness, boast himself as he that taketh it off.” This axiom is good, however, only with man; God needs not to wait the issue of the contest, that he may decide to whom the crown of success is to be given. The rider of the white horse receives the token of success in anticipation; he goes forth, indeed, but not in doubt: he goes to conquer, and that he may conquer. The will of the Most High is already known—the conqueror goes forth to fulfil that which in the Divine mind is already done.

‘And he went forth conquering and to conquer,’ or, *that he might conquer*; or, as the verb *νικάω* is elsewhere translated, *overcoming*. He that sitteth on the white horse, is then *he that overcometh*; and the name of him that sitteth on the white horse, is the *Word of God*, the *Logos*; and this Word is Christ, as he manifests himself in the *Comforter*. His successor, the Spirit of truth, testifying of him, and convincing the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. In the work of salvation, it is Christ only, who overcomes the requisitions of the law by his own merits; fulfilling the law, and thus releasing the disciple from the bondage of the law. Christ is the word, or sovereign purpose, of God, manifest in the flesh. The sovereign purpose of God is to save, by his own righteousness, all who trust to him. The *principle of salvation by imputed righteousness* may be thus spoken of as the word or purpose of God, especially in reference to the economy of redemption. This principle is a principle of Christian faith; and, as such, it

may be that alluded to by the beloved apostle, when he says, this is the victory which overcometh the world, *our faith*; *αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ νίκη ἡ νική-σασα τὸν κόσμον, ἡ πίστις ἡμῶν*. The world being supposed to represent the position of the sinner amidst all the requisitions of the law. Referring, apparently to this, Jesus says to his disciples, John xvi. 33, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world;" *ἐγὼ νείκησα τὸν κόσμον, I have conquered the world*. Christ himself is the conqueror, and he alone is entitled to the *crown*. But he conquers by this word, or purpose of God, which is also a principle of our faith; viz., that in him all righteousness has been fulfilled—that fulfilment being imputed to the believer. It is this principle, we may say then, that appears as the conqueror, sustained by Divine righteousness, crowned with the token of the Redeemer's victory, and using the bow of covenant promises, as the weapon of defence. So, the disciple, enlightened by the knowledge of this truth, in view of all the requisitions of the law, going forth in the trial of his faith, sustained by his dependence upon the imputed merit of his Redeemer, and trusting in the covenant of propitiation, *overcomes*, in proportion to his faith, all his apprehensions even of the fearful threatenings of offended justice. As the blind men, (Matt. ix. 29,) according to their faith, received their natural sight, so the disciple, according to his faith, enjoys this spiritual sight—the sight of God's salvation.

The feeble faith of the most enlightened Christian in this life, can hardly be worthy of supplying a reality for the figure of Him who went forth conquering and to conquer. The real rider of the white horse must be either the principle of this faith, the purpose of God—the principle of salvation by imputed righteousness—or it must be the Saviour himself, who is the personification of this principle, or purpose—the Word made flesh. As, however, it is the *Lamb once slain*, who opens the seal by which this exhibition is made, the rider of the white horse may be supposed to represent this principle, or fundamental dogma of Christian faith; unless we suppose the Lamb, in exhibiting this rider, to reveal *himself* in his peculiar character of a Conqueror, the Lord our righteousness;—a supposition according with our position, that the Apocalypse is a revelation which Jesus Christ makes of *himself*. It is said, indeed, Romans viii. 37, in all these things we are more than conquerors—more than *overcomers*; but this, it is added, is *through him that loved us*. He has laboured, and we have entered into his labours;—He has achieved the victory, and we in him are accounted victors;—we obtain a crown, but it is the crown or token of his success—of the triumph of his righteousness, and not of ours.

The effect, then, of the opening of the first seal, is to exhibit Christ as the *Logos*, or sovereign purpose of God, going forth in the work of salvation; sustained by divine righteousness, and armed with the covenant of mercy,



and already bearing the token of victory. This exhibition is *called forth*, or announced, or attention is called to it, by the *first* living creature, in a voice of thunder; and this first living creature, we suppose to be the element of Divine justice, or legal retribution;—as we may say, the attribute of perfect justice in the Deity calls forth the Redeemer, and renders the whole economy of redemption indispensable. Or, if we prefer the rendering *come and see*, then we say the element of Divine justice is the instrument of calling attention to the principle of substitution, or imputed righteousness, with its attendant provisions; the law as a *conductor*\* bringing us to Christ—the terrors of the law being instrumental in persuading men to fly for refuge to the hope set before them. The action of the *first* living creature, on this occasion, being equivalent to an urgent invitation directed to the sinner to come and see what has been done for his soul. The *voice of thunder* is fearful, but it is a friendly, a warning voice. If there had been no provision for salvation, the warning would be useless; but, because a propitiation has been made—because the Lamb has been sacrificed—because a substitute has been furnished, the terrors of the law are invoked to constrain the offender to embrace the proffered reconciliation.

The opening of this first seal is thus a very appropriate commencement of what we suppose to be the doctrinal development about to follow; perhaps it comprises in itself that which is to follow. Christ being revealed in this first development, as the great substitute, sustained by his own *righteousness*, and overcoming the power of the law by the principles of reconciliation emanating from his propitiation; which exhibition may be said to be the sum and substance of the plan of salvation.

Vs. 3, 4. And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast [living creature] say, Come and see [or come]. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

Καὶ ὅτε ἤνοιξε τὴν σφραγίδα τὴν δευτέραν, ἤκουσα τοῦ δευτέρου ζώου λέγοντος· ἔρχου. Καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ἄλλος ἵππος πυρόχρος· καὶ τῷ καθήμενῳ ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἐδόθη αὐτῷ λαβεῖν τὴν εἰρήνην ἐκ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἵνα ἀλλήλους σφάξωσι, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ μάχισμα μεγάλην.

§ 149. The call to come, or to come and see, is now made by the animal like a calf or bullock—the opposite of the lion—the figure representing, as we have supposed, (§ 127,) the provision for propitiating the mercy of God. Because the call is made by this element of mercy, it does not follow, however, that the subject of contemplation is a gratifying one. Divine mercy

\* Gal. iii. 24, "The law was our schoolmaster (*παιδαγωγός* *pedagogue*) to bring us to Christ." The *pedagogue* of the apostle's time is said to have been an upper domestic, (perhaps a slave,) whose office it was to take the children to school, and to attend to them while there; when the children had so learnt, that there was no longer occasion for going to school, there was no further call for the *pedagogue*.

calls for an exhibition of the danger to which the criminal is exposed ; so, as the bullock is the opposite of the lion, we may suppose the subject represented by this red horse and his rider to be, in some respect, an opposite of that presented by the preceding exhibition.

The word translated here *red*, is formed from the Greek term for *fire* ; it may signify *fiery red*, or the colour of fire. As *red* is the colour of blood, as such alone, it might be considered a figure of something the opposite of peace, or mercy ; so, in the vision of the prophet, Is. lxiii. 2, Christ is represented as red in his apparel. So, too, the Hebrew words *Edom* and *Esau*, have an allusion to something red, or vindictive. The adjective *πυρρός*, (red,) occurs only in one other place in the Apocalypse, where it is applied to the great red dragon, or serpent ; and it is not to be found in any other portion of the New Testament. A word from the same root is applied, Matt. xvi. 2, 3, to the lowering or threatening appearance of the sky before a storm. The prevailing idea, associated with other formations from this root, is that of *fire* ; the application of the term to the colour named, having also, no doubt, arisen from the red appearance of a very strong fire. The going forth of this fiery red horse, thus reminds us of the prediction, Malachi iv. 1, “ Behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven ; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble : and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.” The effect of this coming is described at the close of the preceding chapter, to be a certain discrimination between the righteous and the wicked—between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not. So, also, the *fury* of him that cometh from Edom, is said to uphold him, Is. lxiii. 5 ; as the righteousness of the intercessor was before said to sustain him. The fiery red horse, then, we may conclude to be an exhibition of the power of unappeased justice, to sustain the element represented by its rider ; equivalent to what may be termed a spiritual discernment of the requisitions of Divine justice, &c., Rom. vii. 10–14. If, however, we substitute the term *fiery-coloured* for *red*—“ and there went out another horse, *fiery-coloured* ”—our attention will be directed more particularly to the fiery trial, or trial by fire—“ trying every man’s work ; ”—a trial of doctrines and of doctrinal elements ; for which also the great sword, or sword of the Spirit, is to be employed—the taking peace from the earth showing the inconsistency of false opinions.

§ 150. ‘ And to him was given to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill each other.’—The earth we suppose to represent the position of man under the law, dependent upon his own merits, his own works, for eternal life—eating his bread by the sweat of his brow : the self-righteous principles, sustaining this position, being the *wicked*, to be burned by the oven of Malachi, or by the fire of a revelation of truth. Meantime,

these principles, the elements of this earthly position, are brought into continual collision with each other, whenever tried by the exhibition of truth—their inconsistency, their variance, is manifested—there is found to be no peace, or concord, between them: “There is no peace, saith the Lord, to the wicked,” Is. xlviii. 22. That is, as if the elements of a self-righteous system were a company of evil doers. “Think not that I come to send peace on *earth*,” said Jesus; “I came not to send peace, but a *sword*,” Matt. x. 34; or, as it is expressed Luke xii. 49–53, “I am come to send fire on the *earth*.” . . . “Suppose ye, that I am come to give peace on the earth? I tell you nay, but rather *division* ;”—a division illustrated under the figure of family dissensions. Accordingly we find, although the birth of Jesus was announced, (Luke ii. 14,) as the harbinger of *peace*, that, ever since his advent, the matter of religion has been more a subject of dissension and contention than it ever was before; not merely in respect to animosities between man and man, but more especially in respect to the variety of contending principles, doctrines, dogmas, and elements of doctrines, more and more exhibiting a collision amongst themselves. The truth of revealed religion calls out and exposes the inconsistencies of these elements of earthly systems of salvation; systems professedly Christian, but founded upon a basis as opposite to that of the Gospel, as the earth is an opposite of heaven. Jesus, indeed, gives peace to his followers—peace with God; but it is not the peace of self-justification, or of a reconciliation effected by the works or merits of men: “*My* peace I leave with you,” he says; “not as the world giveth, give I unto you.” His peace is the peace of sovereign grace—the peace he brings is that resulting from the *good will of God toward men*, manifested in the work of redemption.\*

\* In a literal sense, there has been no peace on earth since the time of Cain. Man has always been a foe to his fellow-man. Nations have always been hostile to each other. The peace here spoken of, as to be *taken away*, is not a political peace. It is that peace which Christ has procured through his propitiatory sacrifice—the peace spoken of, Rom. v. 1, as the result of the sinner’s justification—the reconciliation to God by the blood and cross of Christ, described Eph. ii. 13–16. Wherever the Christian dispensation is regarded as one of justice merely—an economy of rewards and punishments, instead of an economy of grace—this peace is taken away as soon as the understanding of the sinner is opened to a conviction of his guilt, of the impurity of his motives, and of the imperfection of his best services. The morality of the divine law extends to the thoughts and intents of the heart, and thither the sword of the Spirit penetrates.

On the other hand, it is unquestionable that the influence of Christianity has ameliorated the political condition of the world. The frequency of national contests has been less, and the conduct of them has been less bloody and cruel since the general diffusion of the Christian faith, than previous to its promulgation. In this sense, Christ may be said to have brought even political peace, and not the sword; but this, it is evident, is not the sense in which he spoke in allusion to the subject of *peace*.



The rider of the fiery-red horse is, however, to take peace from the earth, or out of the earth. The exhibition of truth, showing the exact and unrelenting requisitions of justice—of which the going forth of this rider is a figure—manifests that there is no peace, or reconciliation, with God to be found in these earthly systems, or these systems of earth; the want of peace, or concord, between the different elements, alluded to above, being figuratively spoken of as their *killing* each other, or mutually sacrificing each other, as the Greek term implies.

§ 151. ‘To him was given a great sword.’—This great sword might be put for great division; as we see in the two passages above quoted from Matthew and Luke, the sword is put in one, for what is termed division in the other; but it appears more in accordance with the style of Scripture, to give to every particular its peculiar force. Here are three particulars, which we can hardly suppose to be mere synonyms. The rider on the fiery-red horse had power to take peace from the earth—those that are on the earth are to kill each other; and besides this, a great sword is given to this rider. It seems most probable, that this great or powerful weapon is the *sword of the Spirit* spoken of by Paul, (Heb. iv. 12, Eph. vi. 17,)—the word of God. That is, the word of God in its most spiritual sense—the mind of God, the power of discerning between the natural and spiritual sense of the revealed word—a power sharper than any *two-edged* sword. With this sword, the warrior on the red horse searches into the motives of actions, as well as into the nature of the actions—detecting, discerning, and exposing the *intents* and thoughts of the heart; and thus convincing the world of sin, showing the impurity and selfishness of human motives, and the impracticability of obtaining peace with God by *works of righteousness of man’s performance*; the same Spirit of truth which manifests himself a *comforter* to the disciple of Jesus, being the judge and investigator, convincing the world of sin. The rider of these two horses is thus the same Divine power exhibited under two different aspects. As the element of justice calls forth an exhibition of the provision of Divine mercy, the element of propitiation requires the presence of the provision for the conviction of sin, showing that by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified: the going forth of these two combatants, although successive in the representation, being simultaneous in effect.

V. 5. And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast [living creature] say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo, a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

Καὶ ὅτε ἤνοιξε τὴν σφραγίδα τὴν τρίτην, ἤκουσα τοῦ τρίτου ζώου λέγοντος· ἔρχου. Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἵππος μέλας, καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπ’ αὐτὸν ἔχων ζυγὸν ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ.

§ 152. ‘The third living creature.’—We have supposed the animal with the man’s face to represent the mind or reason of Divinity—as an animal with

a man's face would be supposed to be endued with the faculty of reason. Perhaps, as one of the elements of sovereignty about the throne, we may suppose it to represent the wisdom of God, or the element of wisdom itself. Wisdom calls forth the exhibition now to be made, or directs special attention to it.

‘And lo, a black horse.’—*Black* is the opposite of white. Blackness and darkness are coupled together in Scripture—darkness being the opposite of light. Light, or whiteness, we have assumed to be figurative of moral perfection, or righteousness; so blackness and darkness are figures of the absence of such perfection. Hence blackness, as of sackcloth, is a token of repentance, humiliation, or conviction of a want of righteousness; and darkness is a corresponding figure of despondency, from a sense of guilt—a state from which every ray of hope or comfort is excluded.

The black horse is apparently an opposite of the white horse. The rider of the black horse depends for his power upon something representing an entire lack of righteousness. At the same time the colour reminds us of the condition of those who are groping in darkness, and have no light; not having yet come to the knowledge of the truth of salvation by grace alone.

‘And he that sat on him.’—The rider of the black horse is furnished with no weapon, other than a pair of balances, or, as the Greek term might be rendered, a *yoke*. The difference will not be material in the construction we propose to give. A yoke for a pair of oxen, has some resemblance to a pair of balances; and the use of the balances, as they are designed here, causes the figure not to differ much from a *yoke*. A pair of scales, or balances, is a common equipment for a representation of justice; justice being supposed to balance exactly what is put into one scale, by that which is placed in the other. Having already supposed the lion to represent the attribute of Divine justice, we cannot consider this figure upon the black horse with the balances as representing precisely the same thing; but we may suppose it to represent the element of law—the standard of duty—that which defines the rule; weighing in the balance the requisition on the one side, and the fulfilment on the other—that law which proved to be a *yoke* of servitude under the old dispensation, (Gal. v. 1, Acts xv. 10,) and is still so to all subjected to it. As the third living creature calls attention to this figure with the pair of balances, so *wisdom* exhibits to every rational being in creation the law, or standard of moral right or wrong; corresponding with the dictates of prudence, that he who builds should count the cost; and he who goes into battle should compare his forces with those of his enemy, before it be too late. The law depends for its power upon the short comings of those subjected to it. Wherever the law is fulfilled it loses its ascendancy: it can require nothing more. So the rider here, with the

balances, is sustained by something representing man's want of that righteousness, necessary to fulfil all that the law, or standard of good and evil, demands. The going forth of this rider may thus be equivalent to that manifestation of the Holy Spirit which is to convince the world of sin; a going forth which is also simultaneous with that of the conqueror, and of the rider on the fiery horse.

V. 6. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts [living creatures] say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and (see) thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

Καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν ἐν μέσῳ τῶν τεσσάρων ζώων λέγουσαν· χοῖνις σίτου διηνάριον, καὶ τρεῖς χοῖνιζες ἄνθρακον· καὶ τὸ ἔλαιον καὶ τὸν οἶνον μὴ ἀδιζήσης.

§ 153. This voice is said to be in the midst of the four living creatures, and the four living creatures were in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne; and from the throne itself, it is said, lightnings, and thunders, and voices proceeded. The throne being the habitation of justice and judgment, and these four living creatures representing principles intimately connected with this tribunal, a voice from such a source, or a principle found in such a connection, must be something of a judicial character. Thus we may presume the four elements of Divine sovereignty, represented by the living creatures, however opposite they may be in their action one to the other, as must be the case with the elements of justice and mercy, all accord in magnifying the law, and making it honourable, by appealing as it were with a common voice to the standard or rule of judgment—proclaiming it as by an edict from the throne.

It has been no uncommon thing for governments to control, and even to monopolize the trade in grain, and to regulate the price of bread. Wheat and barley being materials for making bread; and bread being, as we have before shown, (§ 65,) a figure of the means of eternal life; the edict here published is, in a spiritual sense, the enunciation of the exact requirements of the law, as to the only legal means of salvation. This edict coming from the throne, emanates like the law from Mount Sinai, from a source distinguished for the fearful paraphernalia with which it is said to be attended.

‘A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny.’—If the price here mentioned were a very low price, indicative of great plenty, we might suppose the purport of this edict to be equivalent to that of the Gospel invitation, by the mouth of the prophet, *to buy and eat without money and without price*. We are to take into consideration, however, that, in the days of the apostles, a *penny* was considered the fair price of a day's labour. On the other hand, the word translated measure, *χοῖνιξ*, is supposed to be equal to about a quart; and the Roman denarius, (*ἀνράριον*;) a penny, according to some, to be equal to 7½ d. sterling; according to



others, 9½ cents, (see Rob. Lex. 141, 829.) A quart of wheat for 10 to 15 cents our money, or a quart of wheat for a day's labour, would not be considered very cheap. But as this quantity of wheat was considered a daily allowance for one man, the edict is equal to a proclamation assigning to every labourer his daily subsistence for his daily labour. The relative price of barley is indicative of the same just discrimination. The ideas of plenty or scarcity have no share in the illustration. The standard of prices is just that of the old rule under the law: by the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread. Under the law, nothing was obtainable but upon the principle laid down to Cain: "If thou doest well, shall it not be accepted?" If thou doest not well, by the same rule, is it not for thee to take the consequences? Under the law, every transgression and disobedience receiving a just recompense of reward, (Heb. ii. 2.)

The price of the great necessary of life being thus fixed, the representative of public justice goes forth with his balances, to weigh, to give out exactly, in conformity with the rule of law.

§ 154. There are those who, like the fratricidal Cain, offer the earthly fruits of their own pretended merits as sacrifices of propitiation. They conduct themselves upon the mercenary principle of receiving precisely the recompense to which they suppose their own work entitles them. Actuated by this spirit they live to themselves as essentially as did the Babylonish monarch, who was weighed in the balances and found wanting; the sword of the Spirit exposes their real motives,—the thoughts and intents of their hearts. Their only object is their own glory, and their own well being—the love of self is the ruling motive of their conduct. To such, suppose the rule of law to be applied, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart*, and with all thy *mind*, and with all thy *strength*. Here, even in their obedience to this first commandment, they are found wanting; they are not able even here to furnish their penny for their daily supply of food, still less to furnish that which is to ransom their souls, or to lay up for them the provision of eternal life. It is the office of divine *wisdom* to exhibit this rule of law; not only so, it proclaims the value of the great essential of eternal life. The law requires a perfect righteousness, and like a powerful despot it keeps in subjection all incapable of meeting this requirement.

In the figure presented in the Apocalypse, the edict of prices is equivalent to an enunciation of the Law; the *balances*, as the means of trying the merit of all pretensions, occupy the place of the *fire*, which is to try every man's work. The rider on the black horse we may suppose to be that Spirit, or power of truth, which applies these rules, and this instrument of trial, to the consciences of all—an action equal to the application of the texts, "The soul that sinneth it shall die" "The wages of sin is death;"

“There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not.”—Though a man keep the whole law, with but one exception, in that single offence he is guilty of all.

‘And see thou hurt not (or do no wrong to) the oil and the wine.’—A caution apparently not to allow the elements of the gospel to be approached in conducting this judicial process; as if it were said to the self-righteous, or self-sufficient, ‘You prefer being treated on your own merits; you would have your own righteousness weighed in the scale against the price of eternal life; you have heard the conditions,—now come to the trial: but see that you do not lean to the very gospel principles you despise.’

Oil was used amongst the Hebrews as a sign, in setting apart certain persons to a particular office. Thus, kings and priests were set apart, or *sanctified*, by the use of oil; hence, the sign of this setting apart seems to be figuratively put for the setting apart or sanctification itself. To be set apart in Christ, or to be sanctified in him, is obviously the greatest cause of rejoicing; and hence it is spoken of as the *oil of joy*;—the sinner mourning under a depressing sense of his sin, when able by faith to trust to this setting apart in Christ, rejoices in that spiritual *unction* with joy unspeakable.

So, as by the power of Jesus, the element of purification was transformed to the wine of a marriage feast, the atonement—his own propitiation for the ablution of sin—becomes the element of *making glad the heart of man*, not only for time but for eternity. These gospel means of salvation, however, are not to be trespassed upon by those who come to the bar of divine judgment, to be tried upon their own merits. They depend solely upon what they have to offer themselves, and out of their own mouths, and by their own rules, they must be weighed in the balance: or at least such must be the trial by which the doctrines supporting these pretensions are to be tried and judged.

Vs. 7, 8. And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see, [or come.] And I looked, and behold, a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and hell followed with him.

Καὶ ὅτε ἤνοιξε τὴν σφραγίδα τὴν τετάρτην, ἤκουσα φωνὴν τοῦ τετάρτου ζώου λέγοντος· ἔρχου. Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἵππος χλωρός, καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ, ὄνομα αὐτῷ ὁ Θάνατος· καὶ ὁ ἄδης ἠκολούθει μετ' αὐτοῦ.

§ 155. ‘I heard the fourth living creature say.’—The animal by which this exhibition is ushered forth is that *like a flying eagle*, supposed to represent the Holy Spirit in the office of Comforter; as the eagle bears up its young in its flight, or protects them with its wings. Here the parental care of the Holy Spirit may be supposed to be exercised in pointing out the imminent danger, calling for the protection provided—the inevitable judicial death and condemnation to which the sinner is exposed.

‘And lo, a pale horse.’—The word translated pale, *χλωρός*, is elsewhere rendered *green*; as Matt. vi. 39, Rev. viii. 7, *green grass*: and Rev. ix. 4, “every green thing.” This Greek term occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, and in the Septuagint it is cited only to express the colour, *green*. The reason for rendering the word *pale* in our translation, may be, that the term is supposed to be applicable to *pale* green; but grass green is not pale green, and we find it as much used in the description of dark green colours as of light. Our translators would probably say, that no one had ever seen a green horse, and, therefore, this could not be green; but they might as well say, that no one had seen an animal with seven heads and ten horns, and therefore the description in the Greek of the great red dragon should be rendered by some other terms.\*

Green, however, is the colour here, and there must be as much reason for the green colour of this horse, as there is for the black, red, and white of the other horses. Metaphorically, green may be put for fresh, and signify strength; or, if it be a yellowish green, it may be put for fear, or something of a pallid colour; but according to the Septuagint, this word *χλωρός*, so far from signifying a pallid colour, is applied to a green flourishing tint, in opposition to a fading, or pale hue. It is not only applied to herbs, grass, and trees, it is used for them; as Gen. ii. 5, and Deut. xxix. 23, (see Trommii Concord. 687.)

The colour of a thing, in Scripture, is frequently put for the thing itself; as Gen. xxv. 30, give me some of that *red*, (that is, *red pottage*.) So, red is put for blood, white for light, and black for sackcloth. Grass, or herbage, generally is the covering of the earth, it is also the food furnished by the earth and it is strictly and immediately a product of the earth. Its beauty, and its goodness, are but transient; in the morning it springeth up, in the evening it is cut down and withereth: as it is said, “The grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth.” So, a drought destroys its nutritious qualities—it is incapable of withstanding the scorching heat of the sun. In all these particulars, there is an analogy between this green clothing of the earth and the pretended clothing of self-righteousness. Man weaves a garment of salvation, as he supposes, of his own merits, which endures but for a little time, and then vanishes away. The manifestation of the sun of righteousness is as the scorching heat to it—it is incapable of standing in the day of trial, when the fire of revealed truth burns as an oven.† It is

\* “And I looked, and beholde a grene horsse, and his name that sat on him was Deeth.”—(*The Tyndale version of 1534, according to Bagster's Hexapla.*)

† The fruits of the ground appear to have been set apart, under the law, as thank-offerings, representing the sacrifices of gratitude offered in return for favours already received; but as sacrifices of *propitiation*, they were of no avail; for without shedding of blood, there is *no remission of sin*. So the good works of the believer, as



incapable, too, of furnishing the means of eternal life. Instead of sustaining the sinner, it sustains and gives power to the principles of his everlasting destruction. Thus the power, or horse, represented in this exhibition, is a figure of the power or tendency of self-righteous systems. This horse is distinguished by the clothing, the covering, the uniform, or livery, of these systems. The rider of this horse is sustained by this tendency of man's self-justification; as the rider of the *white* horse was sustained by the opposite principle of justification by the righteousness of Christ.

§ 156. 'And his name that sat on him was *Death*.'—This is not a personification of natural death. The mere separation of the spirit from the body is not the subject of contemplation. In an ordinary sense, death has power over the whole earth. Here we find, in the last clause of the verse, power is said to be given to death and hell, or to death alone, over only the *fourth* part of the earth; and Rev. xx. 14, death and hell are spoken of as being cast into the lake of fire—an end in no sense applicable to that death which is the common lot of mortals.

When our Lord says, (John viii. 51,) "If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death," we know that it is not of the separation of the spirit from the body, in a literal sense, that he is speaking. So, when Paul says, Rom. vii. 9, "For I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I *died*," we know that he does not speak of natural death; as, also, when he says afterwards, "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it *slew* me."

There is a death, then, in a spiritual sense, somewhat analogous to natural death, and like this it may be spoken of both as cause and effect. We say of a poison, that it produces death, and we say of a person deceased, that he is taken away by death. We personify natural death as an actor, and term him the grim monster, and the king of terrors; while at the same time we understand this same death to be the effect of a prior cause.

The apostle Paul speaks of death, in a spiritual sense, as a consequence of sin, while the apostle John speaks here apparently of the same death as a power, or cause. The death spoken of by Paul, is a result of the introduction of the law, and such a result we know to be *liability to condemnation*. Where there is no law, there can be no such liability. When the law

sacrifices of gratitude, are good and acceptable unto God; but if offered as means of propitiation, they are of no avail, for they can have no merit in themselves. The righteousness and atonement of Christ, (as the *fat and blood of the firstling of the flock*,) are the only sacrifices of faith acceptable to God, as means of reconciliation with him. But the believer's works of love, or rather of gratitude, are living sacrifices to be offered in return for all His mercies, (see Ps. cxvi. 12; Rom. xii. 1.) Such we may suppose to be the difference between the offerings of Cain and Abel; or such the difference typically illustrated in the account given of these sacrifices.

has been transgressed, a position under it is not only one of liability, but it is equal to certain condemnation—the sentence only not being passed. Death, therefore, may be sometimes used as a figure of the state of actual condemnation, as well as of liability to condemnation. So, Rom. viii. 1, it is said, There is therefore no condemnation to them which are *in* Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit—that is, there is therefore no *liability* to condemnation; the apostle referring to what he had spoken of as *the body of this death*, in the preceding chapter—a declaration throwing light upon the words of Jesus Christ just now quoted: “If a man keep my saying, he shall never see *death*.” So long as the disciple places his trust in the salvation wrought out for him by Jesus Christ, he will not see himself in the position of liability to condemnation. Christ having fulfilled the law for his followers—in their behalf—no sooner is the law thus fulfilled for them, than their liability under it to condemnation is removed. They are thus through him delivered from the body of this death.

This liability to condemnation, spoken of by Paul as an effect of the coming in of the law, is personified in the Apocalypse as a cause, or power; and its sustaining principle is that of man’s dependence upon his own merits; for if a man be not dependent upon his own merits, or works, he cannot be in this position of liability to condemnation. Death, therefore, is represented as a power, seated on a war-horse, clothed in the colour or uniform of self-righteousness; a clothing representing a system of human merits—a clothing as vain and transient as the grass of the earth. Such is death upon the *green* horse: the power of this death, or liability to condemnation, resting upon the position of man’s dependence upon his own merits. This power goes forth to contend with the word of God—the rider upon the white horse:—the word of God which we are assured is to endure for ever, (1 Pet. i. 25.) There is, therefore, no condemnation, or liability to condemnation, to them that are *in* Christ Jesus, although out of him there is every thing to fear. The contest in contemplation, as we have before intimated, being not one between the Saviour and the sinner; nor between the Creator and his human creatures; but a contest between the elements of justice or condemnation on one side, and the elements of mercy or redemption on the other side.

§ 157. ‘And hell followed with him,’—or more correctly, and *Hades* followed with him. There are two Greek words translated *Hell*, in our common version of the New Testament, ᾗδης, Hades, and γέεννα, Gheenna. The first only occurs in the Apocalypse, and this but four times, and in all coupled with death. In the epistles it occurs but once, 1 Cor. xv. 55, where we have rendered it the *grave*. Like death, it is said, Rev. xx. 14, to be itself cast into the lake of fire. We cannot, therefore, take it to be an appellation of that place of punishment to which the term is generally applied; neither can we suppose it to express the same thing as death,



although it probably does express something very intimately connected with death.

As there is a natural and a spiritual sense in which the term Death is used in Scripture, so we may suppose the term Hades to be used in the same two senses; the natural sense being that applied to the state of an individual after death, whatever that state may be,—equivalent to what we mean by the grave, when we speak of it as the house appointed for all living. The spiritual sense is the state of being, or position, subsequent and consequent to that of liability to condemnation; that is, it is the position of actual condemnation—judgment having been passed. Accordingly, viewing man as a transgressor of the law—and there is none that is not so—the position of death and that of hell, in respect to man, are inseparable. We could hardly say that the last follows after the first; but we should rather say, as it is expressed here, the last follows *with* the first,—as the Greek preposition, *meta*, with a genitive, is said sometimes to express *with*, in the sense of aiding, assisting, or being on the same side: (Rob. Lex. 443)—the power of liability to condemnation, and the power of actual condemnation, both operating and co-operating in opposition to the Saviour's work of redemption. If it could be supposed that man's position under the law were a case of doubtful issue, the accused liable indeed to condemnation, but perhaps able to justify himself, then we should perceive the difference between the position of death and that of hell. In the perpetual sight of his omniscient Judge, we cannot suppose a moment's interval between the sinner's liability to condemnation, and the actual passing of judgment upon him. But we may suppose man under the law liable to condemnation, and thus in the position of death—under the power of death:—a Mediator appears, interposes his own merits as a plea in behalf of the sinner; he that was liable to condemnation is thus justified and protected against this consequence of his former desperate condition. He is saved from hell or Hades; that is, he is saved from the position of condemnation, which, but for this Mediator, must inevitably have attended the position of liability to which he had been subjected.

It will be perceived that the power of Hades thus grows out of that of death; the last involves the first, and the first, where man is concerned, inevitably generates the last; hence they may be well used as convertible terms, and hence the power of both depends upon the same principle of man's dependence upon his own merits, or works. It is not said that they were both riders upon the green horse, but they both depend for their success, or their prospect of victory, upon the same system of self-righteousness; as, in ancient military tactics, a foot-soldier and a horseman were associated together, that they might assist and protect each other; the horse of the



equestrian, although mounted only by one of the combatants, was the common support of both.

So far, then, we perceive the Comforter (the fourth living creature) exhibiting or calling attention to the sinner's liability to condemnation under the law, and to the actual condemnation attending this liability, whenever they are supported by the system of man's dependence upon his own merits, or wherever they are sustained by the principle of self-righteousness.

N. B. The construction here given to the term Hades, does not shut out the idea of a state of future punishment; it supposes only that state to be subsequent to the position of condemnation. The sinner may be said to be in Hades even in this life, being in the sight of God actually condemned, (John iii. 18 ;) but the punishment consequent to this condemnation, unless mercy be extended, must take place in another state of existence.

The term Hades occurs but in six other places of the New Testament, besides those already noticed. In Acts ii. 27 and 31, it is a quotation of the words of the Psalmist—"Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," and may be taken in either or both senses. In Matt. xi. 23, xvi. 18, and Luke x. 15, and xvi. 23, it is apparently to be taken in what we call the spiritual sense.

Throughout the Old Testament death and hell are used nearly as convertible terms; in some places both are personified, not as places or accidents, but as powers. The gates of death and the gates of hell are both met with; the term gates being put for tribunals of judgment, from the ancient custom of administering judgment at the gate of a city: as, to meet an adversary in the gate, (Ps. cxvii. 5,) was to meet him in a court of justice; to sit in the gate, (Ps. lxi. 12,) was to be a judge.

The position of Hades might be further spoken of as one of perfect helplessness, and conviction of helplessness; as a criminal under sentence of death, awaiting only his execution, without a ray of hope from any process of law, has given up all thought of defence—the law and the judge have done their part—the sovereign only can exercise the prerogative of mercy, unless some voice be heard equal to that of an Almighty Redeemer: "Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom," (Job xxxiii. 24 ;) or the position of Hades may itself be equivalent to that of the pit—the miry pit—the pit without a bottom, or the bottomless pit.

V. 8, *continued*.—And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth to kill with the sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἐξουσία ἐπὶ τὸ τέταρτον τῆς γῆς, ἀποκτείνειν ἐν ῥομφαίᾳ καὶ ἐν λιμῶν καὶ ἐν θανάτῳ καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν θηρίων τῆς γῆς.

§ 158. Some editions read, power was given to *him*, that is, to Death; but the connection between the two is so intimate, and one is so involved

in the other, as we have seen, that this difference in the reading is immaterial. The power of Hades is a consequence of that of death, and the power of death would be inconsequential if it were not for that of Hades.

Whatever may be the difference of editions, in other respects, they are all agreed in the reading, τὸ τέταρτον τῆς γῆς—the *fourth of the earth*—the word *part* being supplied by our own translators. No suggestion seems to have been made, nor is there any foundation for supposing, that the words, *the fourth part*, should be *the four parts*; as human wisdom would very probably have dictated, if it had not been for the special injunction at the close of the book, so evidently designed to protect the text, (Rev. xxii. 18, 19.)

Death, in a literal sense, has power over the whole of the earth, and the four means here enumerated, for exercising that power, appear to be so many classifications under which all kinds of death may be arranged. Death by violence of man, death by violence of other animals, death from want of any kind, death by accident or disease—death and hell being even described as having power to kill with death itself, which alone comprises every cause of mortality. It is evident, therefore, that the natural or literal sense is not here contemplated, except so far as some analogy or comparison may be drawn from it.

First—*To kill* by the sword, we may suppose to be an allusion to the action of the sword of the Spirit, “piercing to the dividing asunder”—showing the difference between the natural and spiritual understanding; and showing the liability to condemnation, by an exhibition of the motives of conduct.

Second—*Hunger*, representing the destitution of righteousness, or merit, when manifested, must equally exhibit the sinner’s position of condemnation.

Third—*Death*, from sickness, or what we call natural causes, in the same way may afford a figure of the condemnation of the sinner, necessarily arising from the depravity of man’s heart, and the waywardness of all his affections.

And fourth—The action of *the beasts of the earth*, (θηρία,) we may suppose to represent the operation of the unclean and destructive principles of self-justification—principles, by which even those depending upon the sustenance of the earthly system must meet their condemnation.

The term *earth*, we have already had occasion to allude to as a figurative expression for some exhibition of doctrines, or principles, or a position resulting from such an exhibition—the opposite of the heavenly scheme;—the earth displaying the works of man, as the heavens display those of God. The earth, too, with the things which are therein, being that which is transitory; while the heavens, in a natural sense, exhibit something of a more permanent character. That death, or that death and Hades should reign over the *fourth part* of the earth only, is evidently something of a mystic

character. There must be something peculiar in the sense, in which this *fourth* is to be taken ; as we shall see hereafter there must be also in what is elsewhere said of the *third* or *third part*.

§ 159. As we have already noticed, the term *part* is not in the original. Any other appropriate word might be supplied ; and none in a literal sense can be less appropriate here, than that which our translators have adopted. Suppose, instead of this, we substitute the word *kingdom*. To them, or to him, was given power over the fourth *kingdom* of the earth, to slay, &c. The kingdoms of the earth, in a spiritual sense, must be opposites of the kingdom of heaven, being earthly systems or economies—spiritual powers, somewhat analogous to literal powers. Suppose the fourth kingdom of the earth, spoken of by Daniel, (ch. vii. 23,) to represent one of these systems, stronger, and more powerful, in human estimation, than any other. Man seeth not as God seeth. In the times of the apostles, (Acts viii. 10,) a mere sorcerer gave himself out as some great one, and “to him the people gave heed, saying, This is the great power of God.” So it is in systems ; and such we may suppose to be the kingdom, or system, we have in view, in human estimation.

In the vision of the prophet, Zech. vi. 3, the fourth chariot was drawn by grizzled horses, spotted, and of various colours, like the garment of the beloved child of the patriarch, (Gen. xxxvii. 3;) a figure, perhaps, of the garment of various merits, with which every man in imagination arrays his own peculiar goodness—the idol of his spiritual affections. Spotted, or patched garments, and spotted animals, we may suppose to have some relation to principles of salvation, in which the merits of man are interwoven, as we may say, with those of his Saviour.

The chariots seen by the prophet were war-chariots, and their horses war-horses : both of them representing human means of dependence, in the great contest with the principle of legal condemnation ; a war-chariot, with its horses, being equivalent, in a spiritual sense, to a kingdom of the earth. We may suppose, then, this fourth kingdom of Daniel to represent an earthly system of salvation—a real amalgamation of earthly principles with heavenly ; a system of salvation in which the merits or righteousness of man are supposed to co-operate with the righteousness and atonement of Christ, in establishing a claim to divine favour. We may suppose such a system so far to admit views of the soundest character as to be, like Daniel’s fourth kingdom, diverse from all others ; at the same time so plausible as to appear, in the sight of man, like the sorcerer of Samaria, the *great power of God* ; while the speckled, spotted character of its leading elements, causes it to resemble the fourth chariot of the prophet’s vision, with its array of grizzled chargers.

Over such a kingdom we may presume the elements of Death and



Hades, to have peculiar sway. They are commissioned to destroy it ; or, as the Assyrian was sent against a hypocritical nation, Is. x. 5, 6, “ To take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.” The system of self-righteousness, in which the merits of Christ are hypocritically allowed to have a part in the work of salvation, is composed of principles necessarily falling under the action of the elements of liability to legal condemnation, or of that condemnation itself. As in the case of a rebellious nation, the invader finds in the subjects of the prince themselves, the means of overturning his kingdom ; so, in this fourth earthly system of mixed principles, or of principles of the mixed character described, Death and Hades find an easy prey. They destroy all, through the instrumentality of one or the other of the four classes enumerated : the sword, famine, death, or the wild beasts of the earth.

V. 9. And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.

Καὶ ὅτε ἤνοιξε τὴν πέμπτην σφραγίδα, εἶδον ὑποκάτω τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ἐσφαγμένων διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ διὰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἣν εἶχον.

§ 160. ‘ And when he opened the fifth seal.’—We are here struck with a peculiarity attending the opening of the first four seals, which we no longer meet with. The four *living creatures* around the throne, have each of them done a part in exhibiting or in calling attention to the several representations of those seals. Each of these four representations, too, consisted of a horse of a peculiar colour, with its respective rider. The subjects unfolded by these four seals, are of such a character that we may easily suppose them to synchronize. The white, the red, the black, and the green horse, all going forth at the same time ; that is, the spiritual action of the four, such as we have described it, may be supposed to be contemporaneous. The rider on the white horse, with his bow and crown, going forth to conquer ; while the rider of the red goes to take peace from the *earth* : the rider of the black, to exhibit the standard of divine justice ; and the rider of the green, to exercise his power over the fourth *kingdom* of the earth. The four elements of justice, propitiation, wisdom, and consolation, have each performed its respective office. The first, in pointing out the Saviour ; the three last, in showing the peculiar dangers rendering his salvation necessary, and calling his power to overcome them into operation. We are to notice that the rider of the red horse takes peace from the *earth* only ; it is the earthly system only that suffers, and the principles of which destroy or sacrifice each other. So death and hell are said to have power only over the fourth of the earth, not over the fourth of any thing else than the earth ; or if this fourth be a kingdom, it is only an earthly kingdom—something peculiar to the

earthly system that suffers from liability to condemnation, or from the elements of condemnation itself.

§ 161. 'I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain.'—There is no altar previously spoken of, although the apostle says he saw under *the* altar; nor is there any previous mention of individuals slain, unless we go back to the fourth verse, where the same Greek term is rendered *kill*. This term, from σφάζω, being usually applied to the slaughtering of victims for sacrifice; differing from the verb ἀποκτείνω in the eighth verse, also rendered *kill*. But in the fourth verse it appears to be the elements of the earth that kill, or slaughter each other; and therefore their souls could hardly call for vengeance upon those that dwell upon the earth. Whatever altar this may be, we must suppose, from the employment of this term σφάζω, *slaughter*, the souls seen under the altar to be the souls of victims offered upon the altar.

"We have an altar," says the apostle, "whereof they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle," (Heb. xiii. 10.) This altar we suppose to be Christ, in a certain relation; and it is so considered by others, (see Crudden, art. Altar.) An altar is that upon which sacrifices are offered. The altar sanctifies or sets apart the gift, (Matt. xxiii. 19.) The Greek word translated altar, is composed of the words θυσία, sacrifice, and στηρίζω, to fix firmly, to set in a firm position. Christ, as the Lamb of God, it is true, is the sacrifice; but as the *logos*, or purpose of God, he may be also the altar—the word, or purpose of God—sanctifying or setting apart the sacrifice made upon it; the righteousness, the merits, the atonement of Christ, being constituted by the divine purpose the propitiatory sacrifice for sinners. In this vicarious process, the material flesh and blood of Jesus Christ constituted the *body* slain in sacrifice. His flesh and blood, in a spiritual sense, that is, his righteousness and his atonement, may be considered the soul or principle of life of this body; the literal manifestation, and the spiritual meaning, bearing a relation to each other, analogous to that between soul and body. So we may say with all truths connected with this subject, the literal truths pertaining to this sacrifice are those which appear upon, or outside of the altar; the spiritual truths are the souls beneath, or within the altar.

The Greek preposition rendered *for*, (διὰ,) by, or through, (in Rob. Lex. 144, b. 2,) "referring to the efficient cause of any thing," the souls of them that were offered in sacrifice by, or through, the word of God, would thus signify those thus offered in consequence of the divine purpose, and through or by the testimony which they *had*. That is, the testimony, borne by these representations of the truth of salvation, had this effect of placing their literal sense as victims upon the altar, while their spiritual sense, separated from the literal, was as it were hidden beneath the altar. The opening



of this fifth seal thus reveals the important truth, that there are two meanings, and that the spiritual meaning was to be for a period kept back, or suppressed. All which is exhibited under the figure of persons supposed to have been slain in the cause of Christ, or offered as victims, according to his purpose : a figure, which our translators seem to have taken it for granted referred to the persecution of certain martyrs in the early period of Christianity. But, as has been before observed, if this passage, or any one passage is to be rendered in this literal sense, the whole vision must be equally literal.

V. 10. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

*Καὶ ἔκραξαν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ λέγοντες· ἕως ποῦτε, ὁ δεσπότης ὁ ἅγιος καὶ ἀληθινός, οὐ κρινεῖς καὶ ἐκδικεῖς τὸ αἷμα ἡμῶν ἀπὸ τῶν κατοικοῦντων ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ;*

§ 162. This is very different language from that of the martyr Stephen, when stoned to death : “ Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” It differs still more from that of Jesus Christ when crucified : “ Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” It differs too from his precept : “ Bless them which persecute you ; bless and curse not.” Here they cry for vengeance, not merely on those who have persecuted them, but “ upon all who dwell upon the earth ;” as if the oppressed subjects of Nero, throughout the Roman empire, as well as the tyrant himself, were to suffer the vengeance due to his cruelty and guilt ;—a further evidence that the literal sense is not to be taken into consideration, except as a figure furnishing some spiritual analogy. It may be said, indeed, that this cry for vengeance is not the prayer of the martyrs themselves, but of their souls, virtually crying for retribution, as the blood of Abel cried from the ground for vengeance ; although such is not supposed to have been the voice of Abel himself. But even the blood of Abel called for vengeance upon the murderer only, not upon all that dwelt upon the earth. Besides, the retributive rule of life for life, and limb for limb, is the rule of law ; while we are assured that the Gospel dispensation speaketh better things than the blood of Abel. Indeed, the blood of Christ cries for mercy, for it was shed that mercy might be exercised—not towards the innocent, for they need it not, but towards the guilty. We cannot suppose that the blood and sufferings even of the martyrs, during the whole period of their persecution, is to counteract the plea offered in the atonement of him who ever liveth to make intercession for us.

We suppose the earth to represent in the Apocalypse, a system, or something equivalent, the opposite of the heavenly economy of redemption, (§ 167,) and the dwellers upon the earth to be principles, the opposite of those of the heavenly system ; these last, the heavenly principles, being spoken of under the figure of martyrs, or witnesses for the truth. The action of the earthly principles upon the true, has been that of separating the spirit-



ual sense from the literal ; this spiritual sense being represented by the blood, the *life of the animal*, as well as by the soul, in contradistinction to the body. To avenge this spiritual sense upon the elements which have operated in separating it from the literal sense, that is, in excluding it altogether, is, we may suppose, equivalent to vindicating the truth testified to by these martyr principles ; which vindication is to be effected by placing the spiritual sense in its true light : a manifestation necessarily resulting in the destruction or metaphorical death of the elements of the earthly system. A kind of evidence, we may easily perceive, perfectly in accordance with the regard for truth inseparable from the divine character, without being inconsistent with the equally inseparable attribute of sovereign mercy. The cry of the souls, “ How long,” &c., bespeaks a general impatience for the manifestation of the truth ; as if it were said, “ How long, O Lord, ere the proper sense and meaning of the truths we have testified will be vindicated, or made to operate in the destruction of false doctrines, or of the elements of false doctrine, connected with the system of self-righteousness ?”

V. 11. And white robes were given unto every one of them ; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

Καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἑκάστῳ στολὴ λευκή, καὶ ἐρρέθη αὐτοῖς, ἵνα ἀναπαύσωνται ἔτι χρόνον μικρόν, ἕως πληρωθῶσι καὶ οἱ σύνδουλοι αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτῶν, οἱ μέλλοντες ἀποκτενεσθαι ὡς καὶ αὐτοί.

§ 163. ‘ And there was given to each of them white robes.’—As it is said of him that evercometh, Rev. iii. 4, 5, “ He shall be clothed with white raiment ;” and of the few names in Sardis, “ They shall walk with me in white ;” an allusion to the covering of divine righteousness, (§ 86.) The uniform or livery of these souls thus affording evidence of their community with the system of truth, although the manifestation of the true, or spiritual sense of the principles symbolized by them is for a season withheld ; as we might say of the faith of a disciple, the sum of which consists in an implicit reliance on the merits of his Redeemer. However imperfect his views may otherwise be, they wear in this particular the livery of evangelical truth. His faith belongs to the system of salvation by sovereign grace, although he does not himself at present perceive it.

‘ That they should rest for a little season.’—That they should wait or pause, not rest, as for relief. They were to wait until the term allowed for the prevalence of error should expire ; after which, it is implied, the vengeance prayed for would be taken—corresponding with the prediction of Paul, 2 Thess. ii. 8, “ And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming.” The period of this waiting being identical with that spoken of in the same epistle of Paul, during which the mystery of iniquity is *to work*, as it were, *in secret*, a certain power *letting* or preventing its revela-

tion ;—the final manifestation of error being at last brought about by the extreme to which its doctrines are carried out ; an extreme alluded to, 2 Tim. iii. 1, as the last days, when perilous times shall come ; a time when, as it is also said, 2 Tim. iv. 3, sound doctrine will not be endured ; and a time when, as we might also say, in the language of the Old Testament, “The iniquity of the Amorites is full, (Gen. xv. 16.) A time, too, when from the abounding of this iniquity, the love of many shall wax cold. A coldness or lukewarmness generated, as we have seen, in the case of the Laodicean church, (§ 91,) by that dereliction, or aberration from the truth of salvation by grace alone, in which the iniquity of self-righteousness especially consists. As he who is forgiven little, or thinks himself so, loveth little ; so every error tending to undermine the cause of gratitude to Christ the Saviour, must proportionally tend to destroy the love of the disciple towards his Redeemer.

‘ Until their fellow-servants and brethren, that were to be killed as they were, should be perfected.’—That is, should have completed, or have filled up, the measure of work assigned them. These souls, or their spiritual sense, then, being also, like their predecessors, under the altar ; while their literal sense is that only which appears upon the altar, (§ 161.) These fellow servants, or slaves, (σύνδουλοι,) and brethren, we suppose to be other elements or principles, serving or belonging to the system of doctrinal truth, and co-operating with the souls in promoting the promulgation of that truth.

Some parts of Scripture, for example, have ever been, and still are admitted to have a hidden doctrinal meaning ; as if commentators, unable to make any thing else of them, were willing to consign them to what they considered the shade of spirituality, as exceptions to a general rule. The time may come when even these will be literalized, or denied any special signification ; when the whole written word of divine revelation will be perverted by an earthly, and self-righteous construction ; and then we may say, perhaps, *the time of the end cometh*.

V. 12. And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake ; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood.

Καὶ εἶδον ὅτε ἤνοιξε τὴν σφραγίδα τὴν ἕκτην, καὶ σεισμός μέγας ἐγένετο, καὶ ὁ ἥλιος ἐγένετο μέλας ὡς σάκκος τρίχινος, καὶ ἡ σελήνη ὅλη ἐγένετο ὡς αἷμα.

§ 164. ‘ There was a great *shaking*.’—There is nothing in the Greek word translated earthquake, limiting the sense to the action of the earth. The verb *σειώω*, from which the term is derived, signifies simply *I shake*. The term *σεισμός*, is applied, Matt. viii. 24, to a tempest, or commotion of the sea ; Matt. xxvii. 51 and 54, to a quaking of the earth ; and Matt. xxi. 10, to a commotion in the minds of the people. In every instance in which the term is employed, we must look to the context to explain its pre-



cise meaning. Here it is applied to all the visible elements of earth and heaven ; the shaking, or commotion described, being something which produces an effect upon the sun, moon, and stars, as well as upon the mountains and islands.

‘The sun became black as sackcloth of hair.’—Such was its appearance. *Σάκκος*, a garment in the shape of a sack, of a coarse black cloth, made of hair, (Rob. Lex. 673.) The sun appeared as if clothed in such a garment, although the sun itself undergoes no change ; but, as in an eclipse, its rays being intercepted by an opaque body, it appears dark or black—darkness or blackness consisting in the absence of the rays of light. So the Sun of righteousness, although ever the same, may appear to the eye of the disciple, in consequence of the intervention of some film of error, as if divested of its light, or power to impart light : the view of salvation, by imputed righteousness, is entirely lost sight of ; the spiritual sun appears, in effect, as if clothed in a sack of black cloth.

§ 165. ‘And the whole moon became as blood.’—This planet, as it is well known, shines by a light not her own. She appears resplendent only in the borrowed rays of the sun ; without these she would appear, as she is in fact, a dark opaque body. In this respect she is an appropriate figure of what we usually call the church, or that which represents the whole body of the disciples, all of whom are in fact without any light or righteousness of their own ; all of whom must appear, in the sight of Him who seeth not as man seeth, clothed in moral perfection only in proportion as that perfection is imputed to them, or transferred as it were to their account.

When the atmosphere is clear, and the moon is near the zenith, she appears of a white light ; an appearance striking us as remarkable for its beauty, and with which we associate peculiar ideas of serenity and purity. When just rising or setting, especially when the atmosphere is somewhat hazy, the same planet, although near her full, appears red ; at times almost as red as blood. The moon herself undergoes no change ; she is still the same opaque body, reflecting the same borrowed light ; and to an eye more elevated than ours, or to the inhabitant of some other planet, she may continue to appear clothed in the white garment so often the subject of our admiration. The difference is in the medium of vision ; the earthly mist, through which we are obliged to behold her, gives her this red appearance, and especially when her rays strike the eye horizontally, those rays having then a much longer career to perform through this fallacious medium.

In like manner that spiritual body, which we term the church, when contemplated with an eye of faith, unaffected by the mists of literal construction, uninfluenced by the perverting principles of self-righteous doctrines, appears clothed in the perfect righteousness of her Redeemer—a garment purely white,—as a bride adorned for her husband ;—but when



brought down to the horizon of an earthly apprehension—when contemplated through the mists of literal interpretation, or through an atmosphere of accumulated errors—the very righteousness in which we rejoice seems to our apprehension as the red vengeance of an offended God. The church appears the victim of divine justice, or as if she had herself borne the penalty of her own transgressions; as if she, and not her Saviour, had trodden the *wine press of wrath alone*; as if she, and not her Saviour, bore the marks of the propitiatory sacrifice by which her salvation had been secured—marks of her own propitiatory suffering too, and not those of the sufferings of Jesus Christ, (Gal. vi. 17.)

V. 13. And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

Καὶ οἱ ἀστέρες τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἔπεσαν εἰς τὴν γῆν, ὡς συκὴ βάλλει τοὺς ὀλύνθους αὐτῆς ὑπὸ ἀνέμου μεγάλου σειομένης.

§ 163. The stars, in the account given of the creation, Gen. i. 16, are spoken of as the lesser lights, as compared with the sun and moon. The sun we suppose to be a figure of the Sun of righteousness, or of that principle of divine truth which represents Christ the Saviour as the Lord our righteousness; and the moon a figure, not perhaps of the community, literally, of believers, but of that element of evangelical doctrine which represents this community as clothed with the perfection or light of imputed righteousness. In like manner, we suppose the stars to represent lesser, or subordinate principles, exhibiting certain degrees of this light, all of which contribute to enable the disciple to discern his true position of eternal life in Christ, and through the merits of Christ. The effect described as resulting from the opening of the sixth seal, we suppose to be that of producing an intellectual darkness in spiritual matters—a state or view of spiritual things or doctrines, in which the Saviour no longer appears as the sun, or the Lord our righteousness; in which the scheme of doctrine no longer exhibits the Christian community as clothed with the pure light of imputed righteousness, and in which every minor or subordinate principle of evangelical doctrine is for the time shaken down and overcome. The sun, moon, and stars, are still elements of the heavenly system, but darkness has covered the earth, and gross darkness the people; and these heavenly truths are no longer perceptible—the stars fall, as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs. The exhibition of these heavenly truths is not allowed to reach its maturity; they have yet yielded no fruit. As the influence of self-righteousness crept into the literal church almost immediately after the promulgation of the gospel, the doctrines of Christian faith having been in a certain degree smothered before the truth was fully promulged; so the views of the gospel, figured by these heavenly bodies, (the stars,) are repre-

sented as cast to the earth—becoming earthy and literal before they had reached maturity of development.

A crisis, of a character corresponding with this, appears to be alluded to, Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8, in the lamentation over Egypt: “And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord.”

The prophet and apostle allude, apparently, to a similar state or period of prevailing error, when gospel truths no longer appear in their true light. This is said to be the consequence of a shaking or commotion; not necessarily an earthquake, as already remarked, (§ 164;) neither would an *earthquake* be a figure for a shaking of the stars of heaven. Nor do we suppose this shaking to be a *heavenly commotion*, or one operating immediately upon false systems only. Judging from its effects, as already described, and from the subsequent context, the tendency of this commotion appears rather calculated to keep back and to obscure all evangelical views of the way of salvation, throwing the self-righteous upon their own resources. As it might be said of those despising the way of salvation offered them in the gospel, that the view or exhibition of that way is now taken from them; their case resembling that of Esau, as described by Paul, (Heb. xii 17.)

V. 14. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

Καὶ ὁ οὐρανὸς ἀπεχωρίσθη ὡς βιβλίον  
εἰλισσόμενον, καὶ πᾶν ὄρος καὶ νῆσος ἐκ  
τῶν τόπων αὐτῶν ἐκινήθησαν.

§ 167 ‘The heaven departed,’—drew back, *recessit*, as a scroll rolled up, *involutus*. The term rendered departed, is supposed by some to express a separation in the midst, Rob. Lex. 71; but it does not seem necessary to suppose this here; the heaven being a display of the divine economy of redemption, this display in the season of darkness just described is withdrawn. The scroll of divine revelation, in its spiritual sense, is for a time rolled up. The rejected blessing is no longer to be obtained, though *sought carefully with tears*, (Heb. xii. 17;) the gospel exhibition is closed—there remains only “a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation;” the views of divine mercy are all withdrawn, while at the same time, as we shall find, the fallacy of all earthly or self-righteous foundations of hope are about being exposed and manifested.

‘And every mountain and island were moved out of their places.’—At the close of this vision, Rev. xvi. 20, it is said, every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. Here they are represented only as moved out of their places; the change is not that of a final destruction of false systems, but perhaps something preparatory to it.

Mountains in ancient times were places of refuge from an invading enemy; they were especially so with the Hebrews; mountains were their strong holds. Hence a mountain is employed as a figure of means of salvation, as Ps. xi. 1, "How say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?" An island is equally a place of resort for safety at sea; and mountains and islands were refuges in times of flood, or deluge: so, spoken of in the plural number, they represent earthly means, or pretended means of salvation from the deluge of divine wrath; opposites of the one mountain, or rock, symbolizing the only true means—Christ. The insufficiency of these earthly refuges is illustrated by the condition of those who fled to them in the time of Noah, when the tops of the highest mountains were covered.

This *shaking* of the sixth seal has a twofold effect.—The heavenly or spiritual view of the means of salvation is obscured and taken away, while the elements of the earthly system are severally tested; corresponding with the declaration referred to, Heb. xii. 26, "Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." This shaking of heaven and earth, the apostle says, signifies the removing of certain movable things, in order that those which are immovable may remain. The scroll rolled up, we may suppose to represent the heavenly exhibition of the means of salvation afforded by the old dispensation, spiritually understood; the departure of the heaven, or rolling up of the scroll, being equivalent to the departure of the spiritual sense: the revelation of the Old Testament is still left, but it is understood only in the literal sense. It becomes, in effect, an earthly, and not a heavenly view; the only system left being that of the earthly, or self-righteous character, the vanity and fallacy of which is now being exposed: the refuges of lies—mountains and islands—are now shaken to their foundation.

An allusion to this change seems to be made by Paul, Heb. i. 10–12, where both the heavens and the earth are described as waxing old, and being folded up, or laid aside as a garment; not that the true plan of salvation, or the truth as it is in Jesus, can ever cease to exist, but that the exhibition of it by the types and symbols and ordinances of the old dispensation will be superseded by the full development afforded by the gospel. The first will then, like an old garment, be laid aside—the old heaven being changed for the new—as will be also the view of man's position, spoken of apparently Rev. xxi. 1, as the *first earth*. Truth itself must be eternal and unchangeable as the mind of Deity; but there may be certain modes of representing truth, which will cease to be employed as soon as they become unnecessary.



V. 15. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond-man, and every free-man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains.

Καὶ οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς καὶ οἱ μεγιστάνες καὶ οἱ χιλιάρχοι καὶ οἱ πλούσιοι καὶ οἱ ἰσχυροὶ καὶ πᾶς δοῦλος καὶ ἐλεύθερος ἐκρυψάν ἑαυτοὺς εἰς τὰ σπήλαια καὶ εἰς τὰς πέτρας τῶν ὀρέων.

§ 168. ‘And the kings,’ &c.—We do not suppose these kings, magistrates, captains, rich, mighty, bond and free persons, or personages, to be literally men, or human beings, any more than we suppose the rocks, dens, and mountains to be such, literally; but we view them as principles or elements belonging to the earthly or self-righteous system, figuratively represented as human beings flying for refuge each to its peculiar system. The term man, or men, is not expressed in the original; it is only supposed to be understood, or something equivalent to it. The period reached seems to be that in which the souls under the altar were to be vindicated, or their blood avenged upon the dwellers on the earth; and this we have already contemplated as the period for the vindication of the truth, (§ 162 :) these dwellers upon the earth, or elements of the earthly position, being represented as of different ranks, or classes, from the highest to the lowest; each class no doubt representing some corresponding principle, or class of principles. The rulers and kings of the heathen, or gentiles, are said, Ps. ii. 1–3, to take counsel, and to set themselves to break the bands of the Lord, and his Anointed. This was true in a primary, restricted sense, of Pilate and Herod, and the chief priests; but it is still more universally true, in a spiritual sense, of chief principles and leading elements of anti-evangelical systems.

‘And hid themselves in the dens,’ &c.—Although the rocks and mountains were moved out of their places, they still remained accessible; and, notwithstanding their manifest instability, they were still resorted to for protection: another proof that the stage of proceeding here reached is not the final and great change, but only something preparatory to it.

Vs. 16, 17. And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

Καὶ λέγονσι τοῖς ὄρεσι καὶ ταῖς πέτραις· πέσετε ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς, καὶ κρύψατε ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ καθήμενου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς ὀργῆς τοῦ ἁγίου, ὅτι ἦλθεν ἡ ἡμέρα ἡ μεγάλη τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ, καὶ τίς δύναται σταθῆναι.

§ 169. ‘Fall upon us;’ or, rather, *fall over us*—as a criminal, taking refuge in a den when pursued by the officers of justice, wishes the impending rocks to fall over the mouth of the chasm in which he seeks to hide himself, that he may be the more effectually concealed, (Rob. Lex. 586, *πίπτω*. Seq. *ἐπὶ* cum accus. 2.) Fall over us, not to crush, but to protect us.

In view of the wrath to come, men fly to some merit or righteousness of

their own, which they have flattered themselves with regarding as a mountain or rock. We have here the description of a season of trial, when certain principles of self-dependence are put to the test. The justly panic-stricken beings spoken of, have two subjects of alarm—two objects of dread: the face of the Sovereign Judge, and the wrath of the Lamb. Not that these are two different beings, but that the same being is contemplated under two different aspects. To be exposed to the face of a judge, is to be a subject of judicial investigation; in allusion to this, the Sovereign has himself said, “There shall no man see me, and live,” Ex. xxxiii. 20. “There is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good, and sinneth not.” There is not one who is not a transgressor of the law; consequently, there is not one who can appear with impunity before the Judge of all the earth; for, as it is declared, “the soul that sinneth, it shall die.”

But why fear the wrath of the Lamb; the wrath of him who came “not to destroy men’s lives, but to save them?” The very name of the *Lamb* seems also intended to preclude the idea of fear. There are those, however, who have reason to fear, as it is said, Heb. x. 28 and 29, “He that despised Moses’s law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” and Heb. xii. 25, “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.”

§ 170. The sinner, or transgressor of the law, even in the most literal sense, may well fear to meet the face of Him who searcheth the heart, and from whom no secrets are hid; and the contumacious rejecter of gospel mercy may well fear, in its strongest literal and spiritual sense, the fate of those from whom the proffer of divine mercy is withdrawn, and who are left in the final judgment with no other hope or resource than their own self-righteous subterfuges. But in this apocalyptic exhibition, we have supposed, and must still suppose, the several classes of human beings enumerated to represent principles, or doctrinal elements, figuratively spoken of as kings, captains, &c.,—principles incapable of withstanding the test of divine judgment—principles so manifestly deficient in this respect, as to be appropriately compared to the panic-stricken multitude flying to dens and caverns for safety. The prophet Isaiah, predicting the period when the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of man shall be made low, and the Lord shall be exalted, draws a similar picture, (Is. ii. 19 :) “In that day, the idols shall be utterly abolished, and they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord,

and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth." So it is said, Luke xxiii. 30—"Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us."

All these descriptions apparently corresponding with that state of conviction which is to prepare the stout-hearted for an exhibition of divine mercy, (Is. xvi. 12 and 13.)

§. 171. 'For the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?'—This seems to refer particularly to the wrath of the Lamb; or to the wrath of the Supreme Being in his character as the Lamb.

The wrath of divine justice must be directed against sin and sinners; but the Lamb is the propitiatory principle, and Jesus is especially revealed here as the Lamb "as it had been slain." The wrath of the Lamb, therefore, we may presume to be directed against those with whom he has to contend, and not against those whom he came to save. The enemies of the propitiatory principle are the opposite principles, tending to the condemnation of the sinner, opposing the work of Christ, and thus constituting the hostile force to be overcome. To these hostile, self-righteous principles, the manifestation of the truth as it is in Jesus we may suppose to be the day of wrath, represented as a season of the utmost consternation—a manifestation operating in effect as a trial which none of them are able to withstand—as is implied in the question with which the description closes. The trial in contemplation apparently corresponds with that elsewhere spoken of, as a trial by *fire*—the fire which is to try every man's work—issuing in a destruction of that wicked, whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming, 2 Thess. ii. 8.

We have here reached the end of the chapter, but this is not the end of the subject of the sixth seal; the relation, as we shall see, runs into the next chapter. The present, however, terminates the description of the consternation preceding the expected exhibition of wrath; for the remainder of the development of this seal offers a picture the reverse of that which has just now engaged our attention.

The opening of this seal, we are to bear in mind, does not reveal to us the wrath; it developes only the state of apprehension—the fearful condition of all obnoxious to this wrath, immediately preceding its coming. The exhibition of the wrath itself, is reserved, as we shall see, for the developments attending the opening of the next seal—the seventh, and last. From examining the action of this wrath, as there revealed, we shall be able to learn whether our suggestion, as to the objects of it, be well founded or not.



## CHAPTER VII.

## THE SERVANTS OF GOD SEALED, AND CHORUS OF THE REDEEMED.

V. 1. And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

Καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον τέσσαρας ἀγγέλους ἐστῶτας ἐπὶ τὰς τέσσαρας γωνίας τῆς γῆς, κρατοῦντας τοὺς τέσσαρας ἀνέμους τῆς γῆς, ἵνα μὴ πνέῃ ἄνεμος ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς μήτε ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης μήτε ἐπὶ πᾶν δένδρον,

§ 172. ‘AFTER these things.’—There is here a change of scenery, but we are not obliged to suppose a succession in the order of the things themselves, or of their existence. The succession may be only in the apostle’s sight; the things seen may all exist in some sense at the same time; at least, we are not under the necessity of confining our ideas to events occurring in the history of the world at different epochs, in a literal sense.

‘I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth.’—The earth was supposed to be a square; and as we now speak of the four quarters of the world as the whole world, the four corners of the earth, with the apostle, was probably an expression equal to the whole earth; and an angel at each corner, was equal to a compassing of the whole earth with angels.

‘Holding the four winds of the earth;’—that is, all the winds of the earth, as we now class all the points of the compass under four distinguishing heads; denominating a wind blowing from any point between N. W. and N. E. a *northerly* wind, and the same with a southerly, easterly, or westerly wind; these four winds comprehending all the winds of the earth.

‘That the wind should not blow on the earth,’ &c.;—that is, that there should be no wind from any quarter; a privation easily supposed to end in the destruction of animal and vegetable life. The Greek word *πνεῦμα* signifies spirit, as well as wind or breath; and the word translated *blow*, equally signifies to breathe or to send forth the spirit.

If we suppose, for example, the earth to be the picture of man’s position under the law—a position, in which he depends upon his works, upon the sweat of his brow, for his hopes of eternal life—to prevent the winds from breathing upon the earth, is equivalent to depriving this picture, or representation, of its spiritual sense; and as the earth is spiritually the scheme of man’s legal position, and the things upon the earth, animate and inanimate, are the principles or doctrinal elements peculiar to this scheme; so the

sea spiritually represents the element of judicial wrath; and to withhold the wind from it entirely, is to deprive it of any spiritual meaning whatever.

The letter killeth, it is said, but the Spirit giveth life, (2 Cor. iii. 6.) To be carnally minded, or to be literal, is death; to be spiritually minded, is life and peace, Rom. viii. 6. A spiritual understanding of the word of revelation, presents it as indeed the glad tidings of salvation; a literal or carnal understanding of the same word, gives it the aspect of a ministration unto condemnation, even more than that of the legal economy. The withholding of these four winds, may be thus a part of the judicial dispensation implied in the withdrawal of the heavens, although the scenes of this chapter are of an intervening character—something in the style of an *interlude*. The winds are said to be the four winds of the earth. Not that they are earthly winds—but that they are the winds designed for the benefit of the earth; their peculiar office being that of giving life to the things upon the earth, and the withholding of them being something especially to be deprecated.

Accordingly, preparatory to the *coming wrath*, at the same time that the heavenly exhibition of the economy of grace is being rolled up, as a scroll or volume taken away; and at the same time that the refuges of lies are being tested, the spiritual understanding of the scheme of man's position under the law, symbolized by the earth, is also withheld. Self-righteous man, deprived of the view of divine mercy which he despised, is not only thrown upon his own resources, but he is left also to the literal construction of the revealed word—a construction, which can afford him no hope of escape from condemnation.

Vs. 2, 3. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

Καὶ εἶδον ἄλλον ἄγγελον ἀναβαίνοντα ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου, ἔχοντα σφραγίδα θεοῦ ζῶντος· καὶ ἔκραξε φωνῇ μεγάλῃ τοῖς τέσσασιν ἄγγέλοις, οἷς ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ἀδικῆσαι τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν, λέγων· μὴ ἀδικήσητε τὴν γῆν μήτε τὴν θάλασσαν μήτε τὰ δένδρα, ἄχρις οὗ σφραγίσωμεν τοὺς δοῦλους τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν.

§ 173. 'Another angel,'—another ministering spirit, or messenger—a communication; something ministering to the understanding.

'Ascending from the East,'—or, as it is in the Greek, from the rising of the sun—a communication from the Sun of righteousness—a precursor of that heavenly Luminary, which is to rise with healing in his wings.

'Having the seal of the living God.'—This seal, or sign, may be a mark or token known only to the Most High, (2 Tim. ii. 19.) Circumcision is said to be a seal of the righteousness of faith, (Rom. iv. 11;) but,

literally, the whole nation of the Hebrews from the time of Moses was circumcised; while we find the seal here spoken of to be applied only to twelve thousand of each of the twelve tribes. There is, however, a spiritual circumcision, (Phil. iii. 3,) which is not only a seal of the righteousness of faith, but which is also a mark or token known only to God. "We are the circumcision," says the Apostle, "who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh," or in any merits of our own."

We suppose this apocalyptic seal to be one applied to principles, and not to men; and in conformity with this idea, we presume it to be the characteristic of such doctrinal views of the sinner's position, as provide for his worshipping God in the spirit, (§§ 97, 98;) rejoicing in the atonement and imputed righteousness of Christ, and having no trust in any other righteousness, or in any human means of salvation. Certain principles or dogmas, bearing this stamp, are to be exempted from the judicial action of the four angels. They are not to be deprived of their spiritual sense.

'And he cried with a loud voice.'—The communication is a powerful one—something to be easily recognized, or something peculiarly earnest and imperative.

§ 174. 'To whom it was given to hurt,' &c.—To withhold the winds from the earth, is to *hurt* the earth; this we may easily suppose to be the case in a physical sense, and the spiritual hurt is something analogous to the physical.

The word translated *hurt*, is rather a legal than a physical term, as we have already noticed, (§ 56;) it signifies acting unjustly, depriving others of their rights, doing wrong, as Ps. cv. 14 and 15, "He suffered no man to do them wrong"—Septuagint, ἁδικῆσαι. The four angels, however, could not have been commissioned to do wrong, or to act unjustly, even towards objects or beings not sealed.

The verb ἁδικέω, to hurt, or injure, *lædo*, *injuriâ afficio*, may be taken, as before remarked, for the opposite of *δικαιόω*, to justify, to declare one to be good, and to treat him as such; as ἁδικία, injustice, is the opposite of δίκη, justice. Both verbs coming from the same root, (vide *δικαιος*, *justus*, Lex. Suiceri.) as *δικαιόω*, signifies to justify, we may safely suppose ἁδικέω, to signify the opposite, or not to justify, or to withhold justification, exhibiting a person or thing to be unjust, or unrighteous: perhaps equivalent to ἁδικον προῖναι. *Injustum pronuncio*, I condemn, v. Trom. 31.

As the withholding of the wind from the earth is equal to *hurting* the earth, so we may consider the withholding of the spiritual sense from that scheme of man's position, symbolically *the earth*, to be equal to showing, or pronouncing, or exhibiting this scheme as something opposed to justification; that is, the exhibition of man's position taken from the word of revelation



in a literal sense only, is not just—the elements of this exhibition in their literal sense not comporting with God's plan of salvation. To deprive them of their spiritual sense, therefore, is to deprive them of life—to render them worthless ; as it is said of the law, If it be used lawfully, it is an instrument of bringing the disciple to Christ ; if used unlawfully, or contrary to the design of it, it is an instrument of estranging the disciple's views from Christ, and thus ministering to his condemnation.

The earth, as we have said, may represent the scheme of man's position under the law—the sea, the element of judicial wrath—the trees, fallacious means of shelter from the wrath to come, or elements of doctrines of this character. Take away the spiritual sense from the passages where these terms are used in a mystical sense, and you deprive those passages of their *life* and *value*. Something like this we suppose to be intended by the *hurt* in contemplation ; it is taking away from certain terms or passages that which properly belongs to them—their spiritual construction.

‘ Hurt not . . . . . till we have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads.’—The servants of God, are those acting from a *motive* of serving him, as well as serving him in effect. These apocalyptic servants, however, we suppose to be principles in effect serving, or ministering to, or promoting the glory of God and the interests of his kingdom. The seal in the forehead must signify some prominent, conspicuous mark, or token, or characteristic—something indicating the connection of the principles thus impressed with the divine scheme of redemption. As we might say of any doctrine manifestly tending to sustain the claims of Divine sovereignty, that it bears the seal of the living God. So doctrines, or elements of doctrine having this tendency, may, with peculiar propriety, be spoken of in figurative language as pre-eminently the servants of God.

The blood of the paschal lamb upon the door-posts of the dwellings of the Israelites, was a seal or token, protecting them from the visitation of the destroying angel. This blood represented the atonement of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world ; and corresponding with this, perhaps we may say any element of doctrine holding forth this atonement as the efficient means of salvation, is a doctrine carrying with it the seal of the living God. So, although the whole word of divine revelation in other respects were taken in a literal sense, yet every portion of it conveying an impression of the value of the atonement of Christ, as the price of redemption, would exhibit the seal of its truth, and ultimately witness for the sovereignty of Jehovah. The precise nature of the seal in question we do not pretend to point out ; our suggestions are only designed to indicate something of what it may be.

V. 4. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: (and there were) sealed a hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

Καὶ ἤκουσα τὸν ἀριθμὸν τῶν ἐσφραγισμένων, ἕκατὸν τεσσαράκοντα τέσσαρες χιλιάδες ἐσφραγισμένοι ἐκ πάσης φυλῆς υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ.

§ 175. ‘I heard the number of them,’ &c.—There seems to be a particular importance attached to the circumstance that the apostle heard the *number* of those that were sealed; rendering it probable that when the particular principles, or elements, represented by these sealed ones are fully developed, they will correspond in some sense, or in some respect, with this number.

Seals are used for two different purposes: to preserve secrecy, as in sealing a letter; and to proclaim openly, as in affixing a seal or mark to designate the character or ownership of the thing sealed. A book symbolically written, of which the meaning is concealed, is in effect a sealed volume. Such is the word of revelation now opening by the power of the Lamb. A public document with the seal of the sovereign upon it, is an instrument proclaimed to be of authority: government seals and stamps are put upon weights and measures, showing them to be of the standard value or quantity. Such seals are sometimes put upon goods and warehouses, in token of their being in possession of the ruling power. Seals and marks are even put upon cattle and slaves in some countries, to show the service in which they are employed; so, we suppose it to be with these one hundred and forty-four thousand principles. The conspicuous seal or mark put upon them, is something bespeaking their *virtual* devotedness to the service of the living God; something manifesting them also to be approved by Him—to be in conformity with his system of grace, and to be of the standard value of his truth;—in a spiritual sense, Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile—nothing fallacious.

‘Sealed one hundred and forty-four thousand.’—Only one hundred and forty-four thousand of a people elsewhere spoken of as innumerable as the dust of the earth!—a people, as the stars of heaven for multitude! Gen. xiii. 16: xv. 5; and “as the sand of the sea,” Hosea i. 10.

This is another evidence that the allusion is not to human beings literally, but to something analogous, in some certain respect, to such beings; apparently, these sealed ones are principles denominated servants of God, in the same sense that a truth or doctrine, instrumental in the conversion of sinners, is in effect a servant of God, subserving his purposes. Error itself, it is true, eventually fulfils the purposes of God, but it is not an acknowledged servant or instrument of his. The elements of revealed truth, on the contrary, may be said to be especially *set apart*, sanctified, and adopted. “Having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his.” Miraculous power, accompanying the annunciation of truth, is a seal of the Holy Spirit. This

seal, it may be said, accompanies all the truths drawn immediately from the sacred Scriptures, for they have all been testified to, by some such display of power.

We do not suppose the number of these principles to be literally confined to one hundred and forty-four thousand. This is a typical, or symbolical number; the tribes of the children of Israel are opposites of the tribes of the earth. The tribes of God's chosen people may represent the powers of the Gospel, exercised in the work of salvation; the number, one hundred and forty-four, is the product of twelve multiplied by twelve. There were twelve patriarchs under the old dispensation, and twelve apostles under the new. The reciprocal action of these is employed in promoting a manifestation of revealed truth. The first twelve may be put for the old dispensation itself, and the second twelve for the new dispensation; these acting upon each other elicit the display of the economy of grace. The whole one hundred and forty-four thus representing all the truths of the two volumes of inspiration; differing in this respect from the number twenty-four, in the case of the elders, which we suppose to represent only the revelation of the Old Testament, (§ 121.) The additional decimal number (one thousand) we may take to signify only a large indefinite quantity; as a smaller decimal number, such as hundreds or tens, would signify a smaller indefinite quantity; while thousands, or tens of thousands, are put for comparatively an infinite number.

In the case of the seven thousand men spoken of 1 Kings xix. 18, the initial number seven may represent something perfect, as of divine appointment, and the decimal number a proportionally indefinite quantity; the language being equivalent to a declaration that, notwithstanding the universal idolatry of the people, as it appeared to the apprehension of the prophet, there remained still the number of faithful first designed:—the purposes of Omniscience were not defeated. In the same manner we may suppose the one hundred and forty-four thousand apocalyptic children of Israel to represent the original, select, chosen doctrinal elements of truth belonging to the divine plan of redemption—elements emanating from and representing the combined revelation of the old and new dispensations. In fact, these elements must have been sealed from all eternity, according to the divine purpose, and are comprehended in the one sealing of the Son of man, spoken of John vi. 27. The manifestation of the sealing, and not the sealing itself, is represented as requiring a delay of operation on the part of the four angels; infinite Wisdom being represented as bearing with the prevalence of error for a season, in order that the characteristic feature of truth, whatever it be, may have an opportunity of developing itself.



Vs. 5-8. Of the tribe of Juda (were) sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben (were) sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad (were) sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser (were) sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim (were) sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses (were) sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon (were) sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi (were) sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar (were) sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon (were) sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph (were) sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin (were) sealed twelve thousand.

ἐκ φυλῆς Ἰούδα ἰβ' χιλιάδες ἐσφραγισμένοι, ἐκ φυλῆς Ῥουβὴν ἰβ' χιλιάδες ἐσφραγισμένοι, ἐκ φυλῆς Γὰδ ἰβ' χιλιάδες ἐσφραγισμένοι, ἐκ φυλῆς Ἀσήρ ἰβ' χιλιάδες ἐσφραγισμένοι, ἐκ φυλῆς Νεφθαλείμ ἰβ' χιλιάδες ἐσφραγισμένοι, ἐκ φυλῆς Μανασσὴ ἰβ' χιλιάδες ἐσφραγισμένοι, ἐκ φυλῆς Σιμεὼν ἰβ' χιλιάδες ἐσφραγισμένοι, ἐκ φυλῆς Λεβὶ ἰβ' χιλιάδες ἐσφραγισμένοι, ἐκ φυλῆς Ἰσάχαρ ἰβ' χιλιάδες ἐσφραγισμένοι, ἐκ φυλῆς Ζαβουλὼν ἰβ' χιλιάδες ἐσφραγισμένοι, ἐκ φυλῆς Ἰωσήφ. ἰβ' χιλιάδες ἐσφραγισμένοι, ἐκ φυλῆς Βενιαμὴν ἰβ' χιλιάδες ἐσφραγισμένοι.

§ 176. 'Of the tribe of,' &c.—We cannot suppose this very minute enumeration to have been introduced without some particular design; some important meaning being conveyed in this allotment of equal numbers to each of the twelve tribes; such as to represent the classification of a certain number of truths, under so many different heads. Perhaps a proper interpretation of the names of the patriarchs, with a consideration of their several characters, the locations allotted to them, and the predictions concerning each of them, in the blessing of Jacob, (Gen. xlix. 3-27,) together with the history of the tribes, as far as it is handed down to us, might throw light upon the meaning here contemplated.

It is worthy of notice that, in the order here observed, the tribe of Judah ranks first, although Judah was not the first-born of the sons of Jacob. Otherwise than this order, there is no distinction, or appearance of preference. The tribe of Judah has no more sealed than either of the others, notwithstanding our Lord sprang out of Judah, (Heb. vii. 14.) Nor has Issachar any less than Judah, although the last was compared by his dying father to a lion, and the former to an ass crouching down between two burthens. Levi has no more sealed than Benjamin, although Levi represented the priesthood, the immediate attendants of the altar, the recipient of the tithes, and as a body the type of Him who is a priest forever; while Benjamin is the last and the least, both in the order of the Apocalypse and in that of the patriarchal benediction.

Only a select number of each tribe were sealed; thus the difference between the sealed and the remainder of a tribe may as a figure correspond with the difference between the chosen people of God and the *nations*, or between Jew and Gentile, the tribes of Israel and the tribes of the earth; parallel with the difference between select adopted principles, or elements of the economy of grace, and those which are not of this character.

It is to be noticed, too, that Dan is excluded from this enumeration; the half tribe of Manasses being substituted for the tribe of Dan. Consequently

Dan has no part in this sealing operation. None of the principles sealed, are classed under the head, or as belonging to the tribe of Dan.

The Hebrew word Dan, signifies *judgment*; and it was said of this patriarch by his father, “Dan shall judge his people.” The name Manasses, signifies *forgetfulness*, or something forgotten. Thus we have forgetfulness substituted for judgment. A change apparently alluded to, Jer. xxxi. 33, 34, and quoted Heb. viii. 12, and x. 17: “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” So it is said, Is. xliii. 18 and 25, “Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old.” “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.” We have in this change an intimation that no offspring of the judicial element is exempt, or to be exempted from the effect of withholding the four winds. The element of judgment belongs to the old economy, that of the letter—something intended to be deprived of life, upon reaching a certain stage of maturity; and as, without the principle of life itself, incapable of giving life to others, (Gal. iii. 21.)

Dan however is not described in the paternal benediction merely as a judge. He is said to be also “a serpent by the way;” “an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels so that the rider shall fall backwards;” and such in fact would be the action of the judicial element, if admitted into the economy of salvation, the horse of Scripture being, as we have before remarked, (§ 146,) the war horse—that upon which the rider depends for strength and safety. This animal thus represents the means of salvation, or that merit by which alone justification can be obtained. The serpent we suppose to represent the accusing principle, and the adder a deadly serpent, acting with the sting of death; which sting is declared to be sin. Dan thus represents the judicial accusing principle—the prosecutor as well as the judge—the power charged with urging the condemnation of the transgressor. Of course none of this kindred could be admitted amongst the elements of the plan of redemption, represented as we suppose by the sealed one hundred and forty-four thousand.

Manasses was one of the sons of Joseph; yet Joseph and Manasseh have each twelve thousand sealed. We cannot but suppose some meaning in this peculiarity; but for the present we must content ourselves with the suggestion that this something, when revealed, will probably throw additional light upon the doctrine of the substitution of the elements of mercy for those of justice.

Vs. 9, 10. After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with

Μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ ὄχλος πολὺς, ὃν ἀριθμῆσαι αὐτὸν οὐδεὶς ἠδύνατο, ἐκ παντὸς ἔθνους καὶ φυλῶν καὶ λαῶν καὶ γλωσσῶν, ἐστῶτες ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου καὶ ἐνώ-

white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

πῶς τοῦ ἁγίου, περιβεβλημένους στολὰς λευκάς, καὶ φοίνικας ἐν ταῖς χειρσὶν αὐτῶν· καὶ ψάλλουσι ψαλμῷ μεγάλῃ λέγοντες· ἡ σωτηρία τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν τῷ καθήμενῳ ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ τῷ ἁγίῳ.

§ 177. 'After this I beheld,' &c.—Here, again, a *scenic* change is to be supposed.

'And lo, a great multitude,' &c.—It does not appear that the one hundred and forty-four thousand were part of this multitude; but the ascription of praise, &c., appears to be a consequence of the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand. This offspring of the twelve tribes becoming, by their being sealed, the instruments of manifesting the benefit, and the innumerable multitude representing apparently the beneficiaries. The word translated nations, is the same as that frequently rendered Gentiles, in contradistinction to the one nation, or Jews; and the word rendered in the ninth verse *kindred*, is the same as that translated in the preceding verses *tribes*. After having witnessed the sealing of this select portion of the tribes of the children of Israel, the apostle saw an immense multitude *out of* all Gentiles, all tribes, all people, of all tongues; all of this variety virtually ascribing salvation to God and to the Lamb. The multitude was not an aggregate of all nations, tribes, &c., but it was composed of those taken out of these different bodies, as twelve thousand were taken out of each of the twelve tribes. This multitude stood before the throne and before the Lamb. They represent something ever in the sight of, and regarded with complacency by, the Sovereign and the Redeemer—something acceptable to the judicial and propitiatory attributes of the Supreme Being.

'Clothed in white robes.'—They belonged to the system of salvation by imputed righteousness. They wore the livery, the uniform of the Redeemer's host. As the one hundred and forty-four thousand were sealed or marked, as we suppose, by some characteristic of the economy of grace, such perhaps as the principle of salvation by virtue of the atonement of Christ, so the members of this immense concourse wear the array of divine righteousness, as belonging to the system of justification through the imputed perfection of Jehovah. If not themselves disciples, their position being regarded as analogous to that of disciples rejoicing in the atonement and righteousness of Christ, as the means of their salvation.

So we may say, the manifestation of the doctrine of justification by imputed righteousness depends upon the exhibition of the truth of the propitiatory provision. The first cannot be shown to be valid, unless the latter be so likewise. The sinner could not be counted to possess the merit of Christ's righteousness, if the penalty of his transgressions were not borne by his divine substitute; as, on the other hand, the operation of this atonement is that which exhibits the purity and perfection of the righteousness



wrought out by the substitute, and transferred to the justified believer. For which reason, these justified ones are said to have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. As soon as the sealing of the evidences of atonement was accomplished, then this multitude appeared in *white*; the manifestation of one truth thus depending upon that of the other; corresponding with what we have before suggested, that the design of this *revelation* is not to show who are saved, but upon what principles all or any are saved, and upon what principles all or any are condemned.

‘And palms in their hands.’—Branches of palm trees were anciently emblems of victory. The victory gained here is supposed to have been manifested by the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand; and in testimony of this triumph, the multitude clothed in white carry their palms. It is not a victory gained by themselves that they celebrate, but one achieved by their leader—a victory just made known, or certified, by the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand.

As the twenty-four elders, chap. iv. 10, fall down and cast their crowns before him that sitteth on the throne, when the four living creatures give glory, honour, and thanks; so this multitude appear in their white robes, and with their emblems of victory, and utter their ascription of praise immediately after the completion of the operation of sealing. In like manner, the ascription of salvation to the twofold object—Him that sitteth on the throne and the Lamb—corresponds with the ascription of blessing, honour, glory, and power, spoken of Rev. v. 13, as rendered to the same twofold object by every created thing in earth, on the earth, and under the earth; God and the Lamb appearing as joint operators in the work of redemption, although one Being alone (God) is spoken of in the subsequent verse as him that liveth for ever and ever.

Vs. 11, 12. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

Καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι εἰστήκεισαν κύκλῳ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ τῶν πρέσβυτέρων καὶ τῶν τεσσάρων ζώων, καὶ ἔπεσον ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου ἐπὶ τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτῶν, καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ θεῷ, λέγοντες· ἁμήν· ἡ εὐλογία καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ ἡ σοφία καὶ ἡ εὐχαριστία καὶ ἡ τιμὴ καὶ ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ ἰσχὺς τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων· ἁμήν.

§ 178. ‘And all the angels stood,’ &c.—This ascription of homage is represented as offered, not by the four living creatures, and twenty-four elders, but by the angels surrounding the throne, and surrounding these twenty-eight elements also. In this respect, it corresponds with the action of the angels, described Rev. v. 11 and 12, the number of whom was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands. On the previous occasion,

however, the ascription of these myriads of angels was to the Lamb, declarative of his worthiness to receive the seven elements of homage enumerated; this was before the opening of any of the seals. On the second, or present occasion, the same seven elements of homage, with one exception, are ascribed to the sovereign God; the exception consisting in the substitution of *thanksgiving* for *riches*.

Riches were ascribed to the Lamb on account of his being slain, because by his work of propitiation he paid the ransom of the souls of his redeemed. This ransom constituting these riches, or we may say, perhaps, the power of effecting this ransom, vested in the Lamb, is represented as so much riches given to him by the sovereign God for this express purpose. Now, after the opening of the sixth seal, and the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand, these riches are supposed to be no longer called for. The kingdom is given up to the Father, and to him is ascribed *thanksgiving* for the benefit obtained through these riches of Christ: the Lamb has the praise of the work, but to the sovereign God the tribute of gratitude for the whole work is finally manifested to be due. Both receive the ascription of blessing, of glory, of wisdom, of honour, of power, and of might, but it is especially God, as the source of sovereign grace, who claims our gratitude: "God so loved the world that he sent his only Son to save the world." It is the riches of Christ's merits, instrumentally, which effect this salvation: but God is the source whence these riches come, and thence to him the offering of thanksgiving is made: the Lamb being temporarily represented as the medium through which the favour is conferred, in order the better to adapt the mysterious process to human comprehension.

The angels do not speak of this redemption as being themselves the subjects of it, but no one can say that they are not under obligations of gratitude to the Supreme Being, equal to those of men; if they excel other creatures in any thing, it is God only who has made them to differ. Their language on the present occasion may be considered declarative of a general position, viz., that these several elements of homage are due to the Deity from all his creatures; their action, like that of the myriads described in the fifth chapter, being in the character of a *grand chorus*—a response to the invocation of the Psalmist, "Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his that do his pleasure. Bless the Lord, all his works, in all places of his dominion: bless the Lord, O my soul."

The repetition of the same elements of praise, with the exception above noted, may be designed to remind us that God and the Lamb, although severally spoken of, are equally entitled to the same homage; and this so

precisely, that we cannot consider them otherwise, in fact, than one and the same Being.

The word translated blessing, is literally to speak well, (*benedicere*,) sometimes rendered by the term benediction. When man blesses his fellow-man, it is in effect by offering a prayer in his behalf: when God blesses man, it is in fact the bestowment of a favour upon him; but when man blesses God, it is an act of praise—to speak well of God, is to praise Him. God and the Lamb are thus represented as equally the objects of praise.

The glory of God is exhibited as he himself indicates, Ex. xxxiii. 19, in his goodness; a goodness, or loving-kindness, manifested especially in the work of redemption.

Honour and glory, in common parlance, appear to be nearly synonymous; but scripturally, *honour* may be supposed peculiar to the success of an achievement, *glory* to the goodness of the purpose. Honour is therefore ascribed to God for his accomplishment of that which his goodness purposed. If men achieve their own eternal salvation, although instrumentally only, the honour of this achievement must be theirs, or at least partially so; but if God accomplish it all, the glory is entirely his: and this is the glory which he has declared that he “will not divide with another.”

Power and might appear also to be nearly convertible terms; but *power*, *δύναμις*, is said to signify *intrinsic ability*, (Rob. Lex. 169,)—perhaps in contradistinction to transmitted ability. God has power in himself; man has no power except it be given him of God.

*Might*, *ισχύς*, or efficacy, is applicable to the action of God in man, by which the means of salvation are made available.

The *wisdom* of God is manifested in the plan by which the principles of justice and mercy are reconciled, and by which a new motive of obedience is furnished the disciple, even for eternity.

The word translated *thanksgiving*, is from a term properly signifying mindful of benefits, (*εὐχαρίστος*;) that is, gratitude, (Rob. Lex. 276.)

This ascription of praise on the part of the angels, thus appears equivalent to an exhibition of the truth, that in all things, in the work of creation, of providence, and of redemption, God is every thing, and man is nothing: there is no intervening instrumentality which can deprive him of the praise, honour, or glory, resulting from every operation in the universe, spiritual or natural

Vs. 13, 14. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Καὶ ἀπεκρίθη εἷς ἐκ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων λέγων μοι· οὗτοι οἱ περιβεβλημένοι τὰς στολὰς τὰς λευκάς τίνες εἰσι καὶ πόθεν ἦλθον; Καὶ εἶρηκα αὐτῷ· κύριέ μου, σὺ οἶδας. καὶ εἶπέ μοι· οὗτοι εἰσιν οἱ ἔρχόμενοι ἐκ τῆς θλίψεως τῆς μεγάλης, καὶ ἔπλυναν τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν καὶ ἐλεύκαναν αὐτὰς ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ ἁγίου.



§ 179. 'One of the elders answered, saying,'—or, one of the elders *spake*, saying. The term *answered*, seems to suppose a previous inquiry ; but the original word, which primarily signifies *to separate*, is said to have been used in the New Testament at the commencement of a discourse. "*In N. Test. ἀποκρισθαι, dicitur non tantum ille qui respondet, sed etiam qui sermonem inchoat,*" (Suiceri Lex.)

'What are these?'—The Scriptures (the elder perhaps in this case being one of the elements of the Old Testament revelation) suggest inquiries at the same time that they answer them. It is in reading the Scriptures that questions occur to our mind, and it is only by reading them that our doubts can be solved. These may be providentially started, sometimes in order to direct the mind to particulars which might otherwise pass unnoticed :—as if the elder had been fearful of the apostle's neglecting to make the inquiry, and so losing the opportunity of knowing.

'These are they that have come out of great tribulation.'—Great pressure, or compression, (§ 54.) The sinner suffers from an oppressive sense of his transgressions ; but the sinner, merely as such, cannot be said to have any robe of righteousness or garment of salvation, of his own, to wash white ; while those here represented appear to have had some garment, which they had washed white in the blood of the Lamb, and by so doing came out of a certain condition of pressure and compression.

Those who go about to establish a righteousness of their own, feeling themselves dependent upon their own merits, may well be considered in a state of suffering from the pressure of the law—in a state of compression from legal requirements on all sides. They suppose themselves to be weaving a garment of salvation of their own—a robe of their own righteousness ; but it resembles very much the poisoned garment of the fabled prodigy of strength : a cause of increasing distress to the wearer from the moment of its adoption, and resulting at last in his destruction. With a like garment, whatever may be the confidence of the self-righteous in his own strength, he is really in a position of great tribulation ; although he cannot be sensible of this till he has passed through a certain process of conviction.

Suppose persons with the views just described to become so enlightened in faith as to lay aside all dependence upon their own merit, or upon their own works, whether of mind or body—throwing themselves altogether upon the atonement of their Redeemer, and looking to the effect of his vicarious sacrifice as the only remedy for their unworthiness and sinfulness. The robe of self-righteousness, which was once their source of confidence, is now changed for a garment of salvation of their Saviour's merits,—pure and white ; by which change of views they may be said to have washed these garments, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

The disciple cannot divest himself of his own sinfulness or defilement ; in fact he himself must be ever the same unworthy being, but by sovereign grace he may be accounted " clothed upon," (2 Cor. v. 4,) and by faith he may count himself clothed upon with the righteousness of Christ ; and this again, as an act of faith, may be spoken of as the washing of his robe, and making it white in the blood of the Lamb ; but, strictly speaking, even in the matter of faith the disciple cannot be said to wash his own robe, any more than he can be said in fact to cleanse himself. The change of position, by which he is purified, is effected by the divine purpose alone : what God has cleansed, and that only, we may add, is no more to be called common, or unclean. So, in respect to the illumination of the mind of the believer, on this subject of doctrine as well as of all others, he can have no power of himself, except it be given him from on high. We accordingly suppose here, as elsewhere in this vision, principles of doctrine are personified, and in apocalyptic language are spoken of, by way of illustration, as human beings, performing a certain operation as of themselves. The principles of the disciple's faith change the garment of " filthy rags," (Is. lxiv. 6,) once trusted in, for the robe pure and white of God's providing. It is by the Spirit, or power of God, as it is in the blood or atonement of the Lord Jesus, that the believer is washed, and cleansed, and sanctified, (1 Cor. vi. 11, Zech. xiii. 1.)

Vs. 15, 16. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple : and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

*Διὰ τοῦτο εἰσιν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ λατρεύουσιν αὐτῷ ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς ἐν τῇ γαλῇ αὐτοῦ· καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου σκηνώσει ἐπ' αὐτούς. Οὐ πεινᾶσονται ἔτι, οὐδὲ διψήσονται ἔτι, οὐδὲ μὴ πέση ἐπ' αὐτούς ὁ ἥλιος οὐδὲ πᾶν καύμα,*

§ 180. 'Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him.'—Therefore, that is, as a consequence of the foregoing. They are before the throne of God ; they are continually in the sight of him who is of purer eyes than to look upon iniquity, Hab. i. 13. There can be, therefore, no iniquity in them, and there is not, because of the purification which they are just now said to have undergone ;—and serve him continually, day and night. There is no intermission in this service, during which some other object of service is attended to :—the devotion is perpetual and entire, to God alone : and this as a consequence also of the ablution and deliverance before described. They serve God, too, in his temple,—in the only position in which he can be truly served or worshipped.

We have described before the service of God as that which must arise from a principle of gratitude, (§ 98,) something not admitting of a motive of self-interest ; a service having in view only the glory of God, and the

fulfilment of his purposes. So long, for example, as the disciple is going about to establish a righteousness, or to work out a propitiation of his own, so long his motive of action must be that of serving himself—promoting his own glory, and fulfilling his own purposes; but after having been brought to an entire dependence upon what his Redeemer has done in his behalf, he has then no occasion to consult his own interests; his only remaining motive of conduct is that of gratitude to the author of his salvation. In Christ, as in a temple, he is safe. In Christ, as a priest in the temple of Jehovah, he is provided for; he has no occasion for anxiety about his own welfare. He is thus shut up, in the nature of the case, to a serving of God in the strictest sense of the term.

Parallel with this we suppose the principles of doctrine [serving God, and acceptable to him, are those growing out of the system of atonement and vicarious offering, perfected in Christ; principles of grateful love alone being those contemplated with favourable regard by Him who searcheth the heart, as they are in fact the only principles bearing the characteristics of his service.

‘And serve him.’—It is not said that they are to serve God and the Lamb; because, the work of redemption being now accomplished, God is all in all. The Son has given up the kingdom. He has given up his claim to service from the redeemed to the Father. The Lamb was sent to establish this claim: he has performed the work assigned him; he has brought all motives into subjection to this one motive of gratitude for salvation, and he now transfers the whole to the Father. Hence all thus redeemed—spiritual or natural, disciples or principles—in *Christ* serve God day and night; and this as a consequence of the deliverance wrought out by the Redeemer.

The services of the literal temple were typical, both of the sacrifice of Christ and of the grateful self-devotion due from the disciple. But in this portion of the Apocalypse, we may suppose the last only to be contemplated. The propitiatory offering is no more to be made. All this portion of the temple service is supposed to have been completed. The thank-offerings alone remain to be made: not merely the service of the lips, but of the whole heart and life; corresponding with the holy and acceptable sacrifice, spoken of by the apostle Paul as the reasonable service of the believer, Rom. xii. 1.

Whatever the action be, the motive must be that of a thank-offering, or it will not correspond with the temple-service of the multitude clothed in white. Nor is this principle confined to the conduct, or faith, of the followers of Jesus on this globe of earth alone. It must be a principle universal in its nature. Throughout the vast expanse of immensity—amidst the myriads of worlds around us—no service can be acceptable to God which does not proceed from a grateful motive—a motive universally incumbent



upon every created being, because the conferring of every benefit by the Creator upon the creature must be an act of SOVEREIGN GRACE.

§ 181. ‘And he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.’—This should have been the commencement of the next verse, as it is more immediately connected with what follows than with what precedes it. The elder is now beginning to set forth what God will do for his redeemed, in addition to what he has done for them in accomplishing their salvation.

The language, as it is translated, corresponds with that of the apostle Paul, 2 Cor. vi. 16 : “As God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them ; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” There is a difference, however, in the original, in the words employed in the two passages, as there is also some difference between the figures as we have rendered them. In Corinthians the disciples are represented either collectively, or individually, as themselves the temple ; to which it is added, as God has said, *ἐνοικήσω ἐν αὐτοῖς*, I will inhabit with, in, or amongst them. In the Apocalypse the redeemed are represented as worshipping or serving in the temple, to which is added the prediction that God will *pitch his tent over them*, *σκηνώσει ἐπ’ αὐτούς*. That is, he will take them under the shelter of his tabernacle : as we might suppose a powerful chief in the deserts of Arabia, after having redeemed, or ransomed a number of captives, to pitch for himself and for them an immense tent, under which they are received. He does not go into their dwelling, but he takes them into his. He dwells with them, because he has thus admitted them to this shelter, Ezek. xxxvii. 27. Their protection, as far as covering is concerned, is thus provided for ; as it is said, Is. iv. 6, “And there shall be a tabernacle (or tent) for a shadow in the day-time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain,” (see also Rev. xxi. 3.)

‘They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more,’ &c.—This may be an allusion to the gracious provision predicted, Is. xlix. 9 and 10 : “They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in the high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor sun smite them : for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.”

The words of the prophet in this passage so nearly accord with those of the elder, that we might almost suppose the one to represent the other—the reader of the book of Isaiah enjoying, in this particular, almost the same privilege as that granted the beloved apostle—that is, an explanation on the part of one of the *elders* of the blessed results of the mystery of redemption.

The subjects of this distinguished favour are described, by both of these sacred writers, as clothed with garments of salvation—the robe of imputed righteousness ; as sheltered by the tabernacle of God—the covering of di-

vine perfection—"a building of God, a house not made with hands," 2 Cor. v. 1; a home of many mansions, in which there is room enough and to spare, John xiv. 2; as well as an ample provision of food, the means of quenching thirst, and of accomplishing the purposes of purification; with an assurance of the removal of every cause of sorrow or distress.

Happy are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, it is said, Matt. v. 6, for they shall be filled—a promise, of the fulfilment of which we have here an illustration. The happiness, or blessedness, does not consist in the suffering of hunger and thirst, but in the relief afforded. The suffering affords, however, a token of the coming relief. The multitude clothed in white had suffered hunger and thirst in their state of tribulation, or, as Isaiah represents it, of imprisonment, (Is. xlix. 9,)—"That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves." They had felt their need of righteousness, and their need of a propitiation. They had experienced their own inability to provide these elements of eternal life for themselves. But they are now in a new position—the reason of which is given in the subsequent verse.

V. 17. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

ὅτι τὸ ἄριον τὸ ἰνὰ μέσον τοῦ θρόνου ποιμανεῖ αὐτοὺς καὶ ὀδηγήσει αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ ζωῆς πηγῆς ὑδάτων, καὶ ἐξαλείψει ὁ θεὸς πᾶν δάκρυον ἐκ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν.

§ 182. 'For the Lamb.'—The happy state of the redeemed is represented as a consequence of the purification of their robes in the blood of the Lamb; but besides this, the Lamb is here exhibited as the efficient cause, or instrument, of bringing them into this state of abundant provision. They hunger no more, and thirst no more, *because* the Lamb feeds them, and leads them to living fountains; or, as it is expressed by the prophet, they shall neither hunger nor thirst, because he that hath mercy on them shall lead them by the springs of water: God, in this exercise of his mercy, being in effect the Lamb in the midst of the throne—the propitiatory elements of divine sovereignty.

'The Lamb shall feed them.'—The merits of Christ are imputed to them. He furnishes the means of their eternal life. The Lamb leads them to living fountains—Christ himself, is the instrument of bringing the sinner to the means of purification from all his transgressions. The fountain opened for sin and for all uncleanness is the atonement—the full and abundant atonement offered by the Son of God. Adopted in Christ, the disciple shares in this atonement with all its benefits. Christ is the instrument of making his own propitiation efficient for the pardon of his followers. The atoning blood of the Lamb, in which their robes have been washed, being also for

them the well-spring of water, springing up unto eternal life, John iv. 14. He feeds, (*ποιμανεῖ*), as a shepherd, his flock—"He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young," (Is. xl. 11;) or, as it is said of him by David, He maketh me, (as the instrument or efficient cause,) he maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters, (Ps. xxiii. 2.)

The source of the benefit is divine Sovereignty itself—the instrument by which it is conveyed, is Christ; as if we were to suppose the throne to represent a store-house, whence the supply of righteousness, or merit, is obtained;—the Lamb, the Son, acting with full powers, takes of this supply and imparts of it to his followers, (John v. 26,)\* as David, a type in this matter of Jesus, took of the *shew bread* from the temple, and gave it to his companions.

The figures in this description, and in the parallel passages quoted from the Old Testament, are drawn from pastoral life; such as it is in countries where shelter for the flocks at noon, on account of the extreme heat, is even more desirable than a covering at night. The whole passage might be more freely, though as correctly, thus rendered: "And God shall pitch his tent over them; they shall no more pine with hunger, nor be famished with thirst, neither shall the noon-day sun fall upon them, nor shall they suffer from extreme heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall pasture them, and shall lead them to fountains of water."

§ 183. 'And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.'—This, we must remember, is spoken of those who came out of great tribulation—who had experienced the suffering from hunger, and thirst, and burning heat, from which they are now protected. If principles, as we suppose, in conformity with the general tenor of the Apocalypse, they are personified as converts who have lamented, and have had occasion to lament their destitution of righteousness, their need of propitiation, the insufficiency of their works, or merits, to withstand the trial of the fire destined to try every man's works—that which is to burn as an oven or furnace, (Mal. iv. 1.) With the King of Israel they might have said, "My tears have been my meat day and night," (Ps. xlii. 3;) but now, with him also they may say, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully

\* "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself:" that is, as the Father hath in himself the means of eternal life, (righteousness,) so hath he given unto the Son to have in himself the same means; which means he imparts to his followers, as it is figuratively expressed, by giving them his own flesh to eat; or, spiritually, imputing to them his own righteousness.



with thee," (Ps. cxvi. 7.) As it is also said, Is. xxv. 8, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces."

There is a godly sorrow which worketh a repentance unto life, not to be repented of; such we suppose to be the sorrow for sin and the sense of unworthiness leading to the sin-atonement Lamb, and resulting in the blessing of salvation—a result, of which the foregoing description of the *elder* affords a picture; and a result to which the prophet (perhaps mystically an elder) very plainly alludes, (Is. li. 11)—"Therefore, the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. They shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away."

§ 184. We have thus been presented, in this development of the sixth seal, Rev. vi. 12, vii. 17, with two several exhibitions of very opposite characters, two different classes of figures, two different conditions of men, two entirely different positions in matters of faith. On the one hand, a picture of distress and anxious apprehension; on the other, a picture of joy and relief from all anxiety, or alarm, either for the present or future. One exhibition presents us with a scene of gloom, and darkness, and terrific commotion; the other is a representation of perfect quietness, peace, and security. The one offers a prospect of immediate destruction; the other that of eternal safety. We see the miserable subjects of one picture, in the midst of a general shaking of the earthly elements, flying to dens and caves of the mountains; an expedient apparently, on such an occasion, the worst that could be adopted. The subjects of the other picture, having come out of a scene of trial and affliction—having found the only true means of safety—appear in white robes with tokens of victory, ascribing their deliverance to God and to the Lamb.

With the members of one of these classes, there appears to be no hope—their view of their own position seems to be that of perfect desperation; with the other, every hope is fulfilled. To the first, it may be said, in the language of the prophet, "Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake," Is. xxiv. 17, 18. The condition of the last appears to be parallel with that of which the same prophet sets forth the rich provision: "And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees; of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined." "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him: . . . we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation," Is. xxv. 6 and 9.

This contrast illustrates the conditions and the views of those *out of Christ*, and of those *in Christ*: the consternation and the destitution of the one, and the certain comfort and consolation of the other.

We are not restricted to the supposition that the reality of these pictures is to be found only in a future state of existence. The illustration may be applied to the difference of views entertained in this life by the self-righteous and self-sufficient professor of Christianity on the one hand; and those of the humble, hoping, trusting, confiding believer in Jesus, on the other.

The revelation, as its introductory addresses purport, is intended for the instruction, and admonition, and comfort of the churches of Christ. Their errors are pointed out, and they are rebuked and chastened. The illustration is that of the difference between the various systems of doctrine of professing Christianity, or those who call themselves Christians, and the truth as it is in Jesus. The infidel, the pagan, the Mahometan, as such, can hardly be supposed to be alluded to, as immediately connected with the design of this *unveiling*.

Nor are we obliged to confine this illustration to the peculiar views of individuals just at the moment when they leave this state of existence—when their sentiments, as well as their approaching fate, may be said to be unchangeably fixed. It appears rather intended to depict the different processes taking place successively in the mind of the same individual—showing the change operated in the faith of the disciple, from the time of his conviction of his own entire unworthiness, to that of his simple reliance on the merits of his Saviour.

The careless, reckless unbeliever, living without God and without hope, and dying as the brutes that perish, can hardly be said to suffer tribulation in this life; but those convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, anxiously though ignorantly endeavouring to establish a claim to salvation of their own, may strictly be said to be in a position of pressure and compression, and to come out of this tribulation, having washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, when their faith becomes sufficiently enlightened to trust to the perfect work of Christ's suffering in their behalf. They have been flying from rock to rock, and from cavern to cavern; from the noise of the fear to the pit, and from the pit to the snare. To them the Lamb appears only as a Judge—they anticipate only his wrath—they are indeed in great tribulation. Suppose them now to hear the voice of mercy: "Save him from going down to the pit! I have found a ransom!" suppose them now trusting to the atonement of their Saviour, and confiding in the efficacy of his righteousness: surely it may be said of them, that they have come out of great tribulation.

We suppose the principles of two systems to be painted in this exhibition: the commotion and the change depicted, being such as may take

place in the mind of every disciple of the Christian faith. The kings, the captains, and the mighty men of one picture, representing principles opposed to the system of salvation by sovereign grace ; while the multitudes clothed in white represent a corresponding multitude of truths virtually ascribing salvation to God and to the Lamb alone.

In confirmation of this, we may note that the exhibition at the close of the sixth chapter is that of a state of apprehension only, leaving room for the subsequent coming in of something like an unexpected means of deliverance ; if not for all, at least for a portion of those who are suffering the deep anxiety and dread so strongly depicted.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE SEVENTH SEAL, AND FOUR FIRST TRUMPETS.

V. 1. And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

Καὶ ὅτε ἤρριξε τὴν σφραγίδα τὴν ἑβδόμην, ἐγένετο σιγὴ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ὡς ἡμιώριον.

§ 185. ‘And when he had opened,’ or, when he was opening, ‘the seventh seal, there was silence,’ &c.—*Silence* in the Hebrew sometimes expresses *rest*; a pause, during which nothing is done, (Cruden’s Concord.) The duration is not to be taken strictly, but as it is in the Greek, *as it were* half an hour. As in a dramatic exhibition a pause of half an hour, or thereabouts, in the representation would denote not merely a change of scene but a change in the acts; so here we may suppose the pause indicates the commencement of a *new series*—something for which the previous representations had been preparatory: the *silence* at the same time enabling the reader, or the spectator, to take a retrospective glance at the past, in order to prepare his mind the better for that which is to come.

An hour, indeed, might be supposed to represent a *time*, or prophetic term of 360 days of years; the half hour thus expressing a chronological lapse of time of 180 years. But this does not appear to accord so well with the general term of the vision; especially taking into consideration, as we shall see, that time in this vision *is no longer* (§ 230) to be contemplated in a literal sense. The previous developments are not such as to involve the necessity of chronological succession, and the riders of the four horses apparently go all forth at the same time, each having his peculiar functions to perform. The souls under the altar are in the interim in a state of impatient expectation, and the different exhibitions of approaching judgment and of merciful provision simultaneously grow out, as we may suppose, of the four equestrian powers of development. The exhibition of the blissful position of the great multitude clothed in white, resulting from the action of the rider of the white horse, with his bow and crown; and the awful spectacle of those who are without Christ and without hope, being a consequence of the joint actions of the riders upon the red, black, and green horses. The first showing the earthly system to afford no peace or recon-

ciliation with God, its principles themselves being at war with each other ; the second exhibiting the standard of divine judgment ; and the third, with his attendant, showing the liability to judgment, and the certainty of condemnation : all of which elements enter into the picture of imminent danger, utter helplessness, and extreme desperation, so vividly painted at the close of the sixth chapter.

We are now to call to mind the position of things at the opening of the seventh seal. On the one hand, there is a fearful looking for of judgment, and of fiery indignation—a dread of impending wrath ; but the judgment, and the indignation or wrath are not yet exhibited as in actual operation. All the visible elements, it is true, are in commotion, and the hitherto self-confident inhabitants of the earth are awakened to a sense of their insecurity, and their need of a refuge—but the wrath itself has not yet come. On the other hand we see those so provided for that, whatever happen, they have nothing to apprehend ; the trying moment, however, even with these, has not yet approached, although, whenever it comes they are prepared for it. Their garments are *white*, not with a cleansing element of their own providing, but washed in the blood of the Lamb. They have a covert from the storm, Is. xxxii. 2, and from the burning heat, Is. iv. 6 ; and they have the assurance, that their *bread shall be given them, and their water shall be sure*, (Is. xxxiii. 16.) Possibly, as we have suggested, (§ 81,) the first class may be finally merged in the second, or partially so, having undergone a corresponding change of views.

Under the recollection of the peculiar circumstances of these two different classes of expectants, we are now to attend to the particulars of the wrathful visitation of which we have hitherto only contemplated the coming.

V. 2. And I saw the seven\* angels which stood before God ; and to them were given seven trumpets.

Καὶ εἶδον τοὺς ἐπὶ τὰ ἄγγελοις, οἱ ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστήκεισι, καὶ ἐδόθησαν αὐτοῖς ἐπὶ τὰ σάλπιγγες.

§ 186. ‘And I saw *the* seven angels.’—There are no *seven angels* previously spoken of as standing before God. The seven angels of the seven churches, represented by the seven stars in the hand of one like unto the Son of man, could hardly be considered as *the* seven angels which stood before God. These angels are probably the seven spirits, spoken of as before the throne, (Rev. i. 4 ;) especially as Paul, speaking of the angels, represents them all as “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation,” Heb. i. 14. This function being also that of the Comforter, these seven angels before God must be, as we have supposed, the seven spirits before the throne, (§ 9)—so many emanations or elements of the Holy Spirit, constituting also a totality.

‘And to them were given seven trumpets.’—Each of these elements of

the Holy Spirit being charged with making his peculiar revelation, or with teaching a certain truth, or series of truths. This teaching being intended to be public and for the benefit of all, the commission to perform these several functions is figuratively spoken of as the giving of a trumpet. The trumpet of ancient times, in the hands of the herald, or of the trumpeter, was not merely the instrument of calling attention to the command uttered; it also made known the authority by which the command was given, and itself announced by certain variations of sound the particulars of this command; as it is said, (1 Cor. xiv. 8,) "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" The trumpet, therefore, in the hands of these angels, may be supposed to represent an instrument or means of revealing the truths uttered. As the walls of Jericho fell after the repeated sounds of the trumpets of the priests, (Joshua vi. 8-16,) so the bulwarks of erroneous systems are demolished after repeated revelations or developments of truth; as it is said, also, 1 Thess. iv. 16, "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the *trump* of God." We do not suppose either the shout, the voice, or the trumpet, to be literally understood here; but the manifestation spoken of is to be made through some instrumentality analogous to these: it being evident that the trump or trumpet of God is something very different in reality from the trumpet of a man, or even that of a priest.

The use of the trumpet, however, amongst the Hebrews, was not confined to purposes of alarm, or to the utterance of commands. We find the instrument spoken of, Ps. xcvi. 6, as *making a joyful noise before the Lord*; and 1 Chron. xiii. 8, *They played with trumpets, as well as with cymbals*. The character of the revelation or proclamation, therefore, must be gathered from the circumstances under which the instrument is supposed to be employed.

In the great change described by Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 22, the *last* trumpet is spoken of, apparently intimating the sounding of certain previous trumpets; all of which may have some correspondence with the action of the seven trumpets committed to these *seven* angels.

V. 3. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer (it) with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος ἦλθε, καὶ ἐστάθη ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον ἔχων λιβανωτὸν χρυσοῦν· καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ θυμιάματα πολλὰ, ἵνα δώσῃ ταῖς προσευχαῖς τῶν ἁγίων πάντων ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον τὸ χρυσοῦν τὸ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου.

§ 187. The seven trumpets are given to the seven angels, but the description of the effects of their sounding is yet delayed, apparently to describe some process or processes going on at the same time. While the



scene of judgment is being enacted, glory, and praise, and thanks, continue to be ascribed to God.

‘Another angel came.’—While the seven angels are commissioned to develop the purposes of God, another messenger, or instrument of revealing truth, is commissioned to develop what is doing amongst the redeemed, as also amongst others of an opposite character.

‘And stood at the altar, having a golden censer.’—The altar we have already considered the purpose of God—the *Logos*, Christ under a certain aspect, (§ 161.) It is spoken of as *golden*, because the composition—the material—is pure truth; capable of standing the test or the trial of any assay. The censer, also of gold, is the instrument with which the incense is offered: it must represent some principle or instrumentality of truth, by which the offerings are set apart and made acceptable to God. The peculiar quality of incense is its sweet smell; a smell, as it is used in the East, overcoming all others, and consequently overcoming all unpleasant odours.

Thus, incense may be put for the quality in any sacrifice by which the offering is made acceptable to God. No propitiatory offering, as we learn from the whole tenor of divine revelation, can be acceptable to God, except it be made by Jesus Christ; hence, incense is put for the atonement itself, as we find from the direction given to Aaron, Numbers xvi. 46–48: “Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly into the congregation, and make an atonement for them, for there is wrath gone out from the Lord; the plague is begun. And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and behold, the plague was begun amongst the people: and he put in incense, and made an atonement for the people, and he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed.” The incense was not all that was required. It must be offered by the high priest—Moses could not offer it; so the atonement of the Christian economy can only be offered by the high priest of our profession. Christ, however, is not only the priest, but the incense also; the sacrifice carrying in itself its acceptable quality: as it is said, Eph. v. 2, that *he hath given himself for us; an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour*. On a certain principle of gratitude, nevertheless, the disciple may offer his body *an acceptable sacrifice*, or thank-offering, Rom. xii. 1; and it is said, 2 Cor. ii. 15, that “we are to God a sweet savour of Christ.” So, after the patriarch Noah had experienced the signal preservation vouchsafed him and his family, he built an altar and offered a sacrifice, evidently not in order that he might be delivered from peril, but because he had been delivered: and the Lord smelled, it is said, a *sweet savour*, Gen. viii. 21.

The incense offered by the angel may thus represent the atonement, or propitiatory merits of Christ, going up with the prayers of saints; or it may

represent that principle of gratitude resulting from the intercession of Christ, which renders the offerings of disciples acceptable to God. The angel standing in the place of the priest must represent Christ in his priestly character, by whom alone we have access unto God, and through whom alone our prayers or our worship can be accepted. The altar we may presume to be described as before the throne, because God has his purpose of mercy in Christ always in view, and always a subject of complacency.

Vs. 4, 5. And the smoke of the incense, (which came) with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hands. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast (it) into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

Καὶ ἀνέβη ὁ καπνὸς τῶν θυμιαμάτων ταῖς προσευχαῖς τῶν ἁγίων ἐκ χειρὸς τοῦ ἀγγέλου ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ. Καὶ εἴληφεν ὁ ἄγγελος τὸν λιβανωτὸν, καὶ ἐρέμισε αὐτὸν ἐν τοῦ πυρὸς τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου, καὶ ἔβαλεν εἰς τὴν γῆν· καὶ ἐγένοντο φωναὶ καὶ βρονταὶ καὶ ὀστραπαὶ καὶ σεισμός.

§ 188. ‘And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers,’ &c.—This smoke may be denominated the *vehicle* by which the prayers are made to ascend; the ascending before God being expressive of the favour with which these prayers are received: that is, they are rendered an acceptable sacrifice, Rom. xii. 1, by being incorporated with the offering of Christ—the sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour, Eph. v. 2. These prayers of the saints, as before suggested, (§ 139,) are put for acts of worship generally; or for the entire self-devotion virtually constituting an act of worship. No doubt the same prayers as those mentioned Rev. v. 8, in possession of the twenty-four elders—retained, we may suppose, till they could go up with the smoke of the incense; the human offering being permitted to ascend before the Lord, only under cover of the divine oblation. So Aaron was directed (Lev. xvi. 12 and 13) to take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar, before the Lord; and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail: and to put incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of incense might cover the mercy-seat: and this, it is added, “that he die not.”

The apostle may be said to have witnessed on this occasion an illustration of the efficiency of Christ's merits in rendering the service of his followers, subsequent to their redemption, acceptable in the sight of God.

‘And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire,’ &c.—The fire from the altar was necessary to elicit the perfume affording a sweet savour; so the fire of the divine word, or revealed purpose of God, is requisite to elicit the principle upon which alone the disciple's offering of service can be acceptable.

‘And cast it into the earth, and there were voices, and thunderings,’ &c.—The same element of trial, the fire of the altar, which exhibits the acceptable character of a grateful service, consequent to the work of Christ, is also the means of exhibiting the rigid character of the legal dispensation. The

voices, thunderings, lightnings, and shakings, constituting the paraphernalia of Sinai, show us that the fire, which is to try every man's work, when applied to the earthly system, must necessarily prove the tendency of that system to condemnation, in respect to those dependent upon it; while, in its action upon the heavenly system, it opens the access by which alone the services of the sinful but redeemed creature may be accepted. The effect of the casting of this fire to the earth is that of showing the earthly system to be a *legal* system, and its dependents necessarily elements of self-righteousness; the exhibition of this twofold process of the altar-service being a prelude of the more extended illustrations about to be presented.

Vs. 6, 7. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

Καὶ οἱ ἐπὶ τὰ ἄγγελοι οἱ ἔχοντες τὰς ἐπὶ τὰ σάλπιγγας ἡτοιμάσιν ἑαυτοὺς, ἵνα σαλπίσωσι. Καὶ ὁ πρῶτος ἐσάλπισε, καὶ ἐγένετο χάλαζα καὶ πῦρ μεμιγμένα ἐν αἵματι, καὶ ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν γῆν· καὶ τὸ τρίτον τῆς γῆς κατεκίη, καὶ τὸ τρίτον τῶν δένδρων κατεκίη, καὶ πᾶς χόρτος χλωρὸς κατεκίη.

§ 189. 'And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.'—An intimation of the simultaneous action of these trumpets. It is not said that the first angel prepared himself to sound, and afterwards, that the second angel did so, but they all prepared themselves together, and may be supposed to have sounded together, although the apostle could hear and describe but one at a time. The revelation of the events or things represented, we may suppose to be coincident, or synchronical, if indeed *time* is at all to be taken into consideration in respect to them. The action referred to by the several trumpets we do not suppose to be necessarily successive, unless we make an exception as to the three last, or woe-trumpets; and here the separation may be rather in the sense than in the time, that is, time in a historical sense. We suppose the blasts of these several trumpets to be progressive developments of truth; by which especially the anti-Christian system, comprehending perhaps all false systems, is to be overthrown. The attack upon this system may have been prefigured in some degree by the storming of the city of Jericho, as already cited: the sounding of the last angel's trumpet, corresponding with the last day's sounding of the priests, with their rams' horns, under the conduct of Joshua, (Jesus,) the type of Christ.

'The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood.'—Hail and fire, in a natural or physical sense, are elements of the most opposite characters; but in a spiritual sense, as figuratively employed here, a like quality is attributed to both. Both are destructive instruments, and as such are repeatedly associated in Scripture exhibitions of the wrath of Almighty God; as it is said of Egypt—He gave them hail



for rain, and flaming fire in their land. And as, in a spiritual sense, fire is represented to be the instrument of trying every doctrine or work ; so, in the same sense, hail is spoken of as the means of exposing the fallacy of every vain scheme of salvation : “ Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with Hades, are we (or we are) at agreement ; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us : for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves : therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation : he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness (justice) to the plummet : and *the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies*, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with Hades shall not stand,” Is. xxviii. 15–18.

The same element of divine power which, when mercifully employed, falls like showers upon the mown grass, when sent judicially, is condensed (transformed) into a destructive agent. So, the same rays of the Sun of righteousness which, as messengers of mercy, appear to be instruments of consolation, when falling in judgment upon subjects of divine displeasure, are like the burning heat scorching the parched earth, and destroying vegetable as well as animal life.

§ 190 ‘Mingled with blood.’—Blood is the life of the animal, and is accordingly a figure of the element of divine justice, demanding the life of the sinner. Like fire and water, however, blood has both its benign and its vindictive signification : the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin ; the blood of man is the witness of his guilt, the evidence of his pollution, and, like the blood of Abel, calls from the earth for vengeance. The blood of Christ is represented by the purifying, vivifying element of water, when it is exhibited in showers, or fountains, or as a river of life ; but if we suppose in the figure a shower of blood to be substituted for water, as was the case in Egypt, (Ex. vii. 1,) it is evident that the visitation is one of judgment, and not of mercy ; an element of putrefaction and of death is substituted for one of life. Such we suppose to be the character of the exhibition elicited by the opening of the first seal. It is an exposure of the vindictive features of the judicial economy in their severest aspect.

‘And they were cast upon the earth :’—or, according to the Latin of Leusden, *missa sunt*, they are sent to the earth.

The earth we suppose to be a false system, or a system of a legal character—false, so far as it professes to provide a means of salvation for a guilty world. Its elements for the most part are false in the same relation. There may be some exceptions, however ; as the one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed ones were exceptions, amongst the other inhabit-

ants of the earth, (Rev. vii. 3.) The elements of judicial visitation represented by fire, hail, and blood, we may suppose to be brought to bear upon this legal or fallacious system, with its peculiar features. The system has already proved to be false, and is now about to be destroyed—judgment having been laid to the line, and justice to the plummet: as an architect, after having ascertained by the line and plummet the deviation of the wall of his building from the true line of gravity, determines upon its entire destruction.

§ 191. ‘And the third part of the earth was burned up.’—This is not in our common English version, but it is found in the editions of the Greek generally supposed to be most correct, (vide Rob. ed. New Testament, New-York, 1842.)

‘The third part,’ τὸ τρίτον.—The word *part*, it is to be noticed, is supplied in our translation in this and in other like places where the term is used. In the original, the words *the third* are all that is expressed, leaving the reader to supply the term apparently the most appropriate. It is very evident that this term *part*, τὸ μέρος, if admitted, is not to be construed literally; it must signify something else than a material part, and we have perhaps as good ground for supposing the word *ρόημα* to be understood, as the word *μέρος*, or in English, the word *sense*, as *part*. The Greek words being of the same gender, and *ρόημα* being employed by ecclesiastical writers to express the spiritual sense, as opposed to the literal sense of the sacred writings—*apud scriptores ecclesiast. ρόημα notat sensum Scripturæ, et opponitur τῷ γράμματι*, (Suiceri Lex.) We suppose, then, by the *third* of the earth, or of the trees, or of any thing else, in apocalyptic language, the thing spoken of is to be understood in its *third sense*, and that this third sense is its *spiritual* sense: accordingly we say here, “*And the earth in its third, or spiritual sense, was burned up.*” In the version of Cranmer, 1539, to avoid the difficulty, it is said, “And the thirde parte of the erth was set on fyre, and the thirde parte of trees was burnt,” (Bagster’s Hexapla,) but there is nothing to warrant this qualification in the original. The Greek term translated burnt, is the same as that employed by Peter in his prediction of the entire combustion and destruction of the earth, and of the things that are therein.

It is said, Zech. xiii. 8, 9, “And it shall come to pass in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; the third shall be left therein, and I will bring the third (part) through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried:” or, according to the Septuagint, ‘and it shall be in all the earth, ἐν πάσῃ τῇ γῇ, says the Lord, the two parts of it, (that is, of the earth and all that belongs to it,) shall be utterly destroyed, and come to an end; but the *third* shall remain, or survive in it; and I will bring *the third* through the fire, and I will submit them to the test of fire, as silver is submitted to the test, and I will try them as gold is tried.’ All three parts are to be tried, but the third only is to survive the trial.

The words τὰ δύο μέρη, the two parts, are here used, it is true, but the term μέρος, Heb. in this passage חֵצִי, Lat. *os*, Trom. Concord., has also several significations, such as part, share, particular, head, respect, (Rob. Lex. 440.)\*

The third part, third time, third day, month, and year, and even the third heavens, are particularly distinguished in Scripture; *the third* seeming to carry with it an idea of completion, or of perfection, not belonging to the other two; accordingly, if we substitute the term *sense* for *part*, we shall readily perceive that if there are three senses in which a figure or figurative passage may be understood, the third sense is the real or abiding sense—that which will remain when the other two are *done with*, or no longer needed.

We say, for example, that the earth, the trees, &c., are destroyed *in their third sense*; not that the sense is destroyed, but that the thing spoken of is destroyed, in this third, or spiritual sense.

§ 192. The three senses we suppose to be the material, the metaphorical, and the spiritual. The sense in which any particular passage of Scripture is to be understood is to be known by the context, and the circumstances under which the term is employed. When it is said of Saul, Acts ix. 4–8, that he fell to the earth, and rose from the earth, it is plain that the material or physical earth is spoken of. When it is said, 1 Kings x. 24, all the *earth* sought to Solomon, it is equally evident that the term is metaphorical—the earth being put for the inhabitants of the earth, and the term *all* expressing hyperbolically all the then known nations of the earth; but when it is said, Is. xiii. 13, The earth shall remove out of her place, and Rev. xx. 11, From whose face the earth fled away, it is certain that neither this material globe of earth nor the mass of its inhabitants is alluded to. The term cannot but be understood in a third sense, and this we call the spiritual or analogical sense. That is, as the earth in a physical or natural sense is that which affords to man the means of life, and upon which he depends, so, in a sense analogical to this, the spiritual earth of the Apocalypse is that legal system which supposes man to be dependent upon his own works or merits, and this spiritual sense we call the *third* of the earth, τὸ τρίτον νόημα τῆς γῆς. So in the Scriptural uses of the term *light*, we take the first sense to be literally physical light, the second sense, metaphorically, intellectual light, and the third sense, spiritually, righteousness or the glory of moral perfection. So likewise the term heaven, or heavens,

\* There is an apparent contradiction in these two passages; the third being in one case preserved, and in the other destroyed. We suppose, however, the prophet to refer to the *mode of interpreting* the figurative language of Revelation,—pointing out the *sense* which is to endure the predicted trial. The description of the Apocalypse, on the contrary, applies to the *subject* which in this *enduring sense* is to be destroyed; by a figure of speech the *third* of ships, trees, &c., being put for these things spoken of spiritually, that is, in this third or enduring sense.



in its physical sense expresses the atmosphere around the earth, with the stars, planets, &c., as they appear to the human eye: in its metaphorical sense, all that we commonly understand by the revelation of heavenly things contained in the Scriptures, as ordinarily understood: in its third sense, an exhibition of the whole scheme of divine government, as contained in the Scriptures, spiritually understood; manifesting the glory of God, especially in the work of redemption, analogically with the display of his wondrous works in the material firmament around us. This spiritual heaven, or display of the divine economy, is apparently the *third heaven* or paradise spoken of by Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 2 and 4; Paul being caught up to this third heaven, in the same sense that John was *in Spirit* in heaven, immediately after seeing the door opened, and hearing the invitation, "Come up hither." The design, in both cases, was that of communicating certain special revelations to these two favoured individuals; the difference between the circumstances of the two apostles being principally this, that while one heard unspeakable words, which he was not permitted to repeat, the other received his revelation expressly for the purpose of transmitting it to his fellow-servants of every age and country.

§ 193. The later Jews, it is said, (Rob. Lex. 526, 527,) spoke of three heavens: the atmosphere immediately around the earth, the space above this atmosphere, in which the stars were supposed to be placed, and the ethereal space beyond, considered the peculiar residence of Deity. We cannot suppose Paul to have adopted this mistaken theory, intending to be understood as having been literally taken up three strata of atmosphere, especially when perhaps none more readily than Paul would admit that the Deity can enlighten the mind of man as much and as well in one material atmosphere as in another. "The sense," says Robinson, "is, that he had received the most intimate and perfect communication of the divine will;" and this we suppose to be equivalent to what we denominate the enjoyment of an exhibition of heaven, or of paradise, in its third or spiritual sense. Paul, however, may have drawn his figure for illustration from this Jewish notion. If we choose to spiritualize the *three* heavens of Paul, so that they may all bear an analogy to the three Jewish heavens, the result will be nearly the same. The view of divine things afforded by the prophecies, types, institutions, and shadows of the Old Testament, may constitute the first, appearing as these do through the murky atmosphere of a literal understanding. Such we may suppose to be the view enjoyed by the patriarchs of old, as it was gradually unfolded by a succession of these figures.

The second heaven we may say is that exhibition of the divine economy which we have in the literal or ordinary meaning of the New Testament, in which the *material* blood and body of the Lord Jesus are taken as the

elements of his propitiatory sacrifice. A view to which, generally speaking, the faith of disciples has been hitherto for the most part confined. This is an atmosphere clearer than the last, but still it is physical, natural, material, and literal.

The third heaven we suppose to exhibit the same things or objects, but with their spiritual meaning; the atonement of Christ, or his substitution of himself, and God in him, in behalf of the sinner, and his righteousness imputed to the disciple, occupying the places of the material blood and body of Jesus. Such a view awaits the believer in the next state of existence; such a view we suppose to have been enjoyed by the apostles, Paul and John; and such a view may be enjoyed, even in this life, whenever the eyes of the disciple's understanding are fully enlightened. Something like this, apparently, having been contemplated by the martyr Stephen, when filled with the Holy Spirit, he saw heaven opened, the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, Acts. vii. 56.

We have indulged the more freely in these suggestions as to *the third part*, because, as we shall find, the term repeatedly occurs, and appears to be susceptible of no other construction than that here put upon it.

The earth, then, in its third sense, was burned up. That is, the effect of the development resulting from the proclamation of this first trumpet was to destroy the earth, or legal system—the self-righteous platform of erroneous views, figuratively spoken of as the earth—the fire with the hail being the fire to try every man's work.

§ 194. 'And the third (part) of trees,' &c.—As the apostle Peter says, (2 Peter iii. 10,) the earth, with the works that are therein, shall be burned up, so it is said here that, with the third of the earth, the third also of the trees, and all green grass, or all kinds of herbage, were, in the same sense, burnt up.

The word translated *green* is the same as that rendered *pale* when it is applied to the colour of a horse, (Rev. vi. 8;) and we might accordingly say here, and all *pale grass*; but we have already shown that the word strictly signifies *green*, and nothing else, at least in the Apocalypse.

The word translated *grass* is said to apply especially to fodder for cattle; *green* fodder must signify this herbage while attached to the earth, furnishing both food for animals, and clothing or covering for the earth; while fodder not green would apply only to the same herbage disconnected from the earth. Hay and stubble, it is true, would be judged by man most fit subjects for fire; but what is here contemplated, we apprehend, is to show those things in which human pride is most prone to glory, to be those which God counts as worthless, and deals with only as chaff.

As we have supposed the earth to be the figure of a system, or economy of salvation, in which man finds, as he thinks, a place of security—a

rest, a foundation upon which to depend—so we suppose trees and green herbage to be appendages of the same system, so many principles emanating from and depending upon it. Trees afford shade and shelter, protection and refuge to birds, and means of concealment and hiding places for man and other animals; they afford also, in a degree, shelter from the scorching rays of the sun. Adam and Eve, after their first act of disobedience, hid themselves, as they thought, in the trees of the garden. Trees, therefore, as figures, are equivalent to a certain class of refuges of lies—fallacious principles of doctrine, exhibiting supposed means of safety from the requisitions of divine justice. So green grass, as a clothing of the earth, as well as an element of food, may represent pretensions to righteousness formed from the vain estimate of human merits—like grass beautiful in appearance, but of short duration, withering and fading away as soon as tried by the fire of that ordeal, of which it is said, it shall burn as an oven.

Vs. 8, 9. And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third (part) of the sea became blood; and the third (part) of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third (part) of the ships were destroyed.

*Καὶ ὁ δεύτερος ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισε, καὶ ὡς ὄρος μέγα πυρὶ καιόμενον ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν· καὶ ἐγένετο τὸ τρίτον τῆς θαλάσσης αἷμα, καὶ ἀπέθανε τὸ τρίτον τῶν κτισμάτων τῶν ἐν τῇ θαλάσσῃ, τὰ ἔχοντα ψυχάς, καὶ τὸ τρίτον τῶν πλοίων διεφθάρησαν.*

§ 195. ‘And a great mountain,’ &c.—Mountains, as already noticed, (§ 167,) are places of refuge in a time of invasion or in a time of inundation, and as such they represent means of salvation, real or supposed. It is said, Isaiah ii. 2, “It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it.” There are other mountains, therefore, besides that of the Lord’s house, which are to be manifested as being subordinate to that one mountain, the only true refuge; in allusion to which, apparently, it is said, Ps. xxxvi. 6, “God’s righteousness is like the great mountains.” A stone is spoken of, Dan. ii. 35 and 45, as cut out of a mountain without hands, which itself became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. The same mountain, no doubt, as that said to be exalted upon the tops of all other mountains and hills, for such would be a mountain filling the whole earth. The stone, too, is probably the same as that spoken of 1 Peter ii. 7, “The stone which the builders refused, and which became the chief stone of the corner,” (the key-stone of the arch)—the chosen, precious key-stone—the rock upon which rests the whole economy of salvation, and all dependent upon that economy. The gracious provision of propitiation against which the elements of justice (the gates of Hades) can never prevail—a *stratum* of rock, of which it is



said, 1 Cor. iii. 11, Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

This mountain, however, was not *the* great mountain, but only, as it were, a great mountain. It was not cast upon the land, or upon the hills, but into the sea, producing an effect corresponding in degree, though not in kind, with that which an immense body cast into the sea might be supposed to produce.

‘Burning with fire.’—Not the instrument of setting fire to other objects, but itself in a state of combustion—subject to the action of fire. We may suppose this mountain to represent a false system, the destructibility of which is being manifested. It is, however, no ordinary system, but one of great pretensions, reminding us of the declaration by the mouth of the prophet, Jeremiah li. 25, 26, “Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the Lord, which destroyest all the earth; and I will stretch out my hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain. And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations; but thou shalt be desolate forever, saith the Lord.”

§ 196. ‘Was cast into the sea, and the third (part) of the sea became blood.’—The mountain, or system, while thus undergoing the trial by fire, comes in contact with the sea, or element of vindictive justice, such as we have supposed this figure to represent, (§ 124.) This contact being also equivalent to the administration of a test. The destruction of the false foundation, (the mountain,) showing the element of judicial vengeance connected with it to be an element of blood. The reputed agent of purification is now manifested to be, like the law itself, not only incapable of giving life, but actually demanding the life of the criminal. The nature of the sea is not changed, but its true character is exhibited. A like figure we may find in the Red Sea, or sea of Edom, (red,) through which the Israelites could pass only under the conduct of him who had brought them out of the state of Egyptian bondage; and who, on this account, is spoken of as a prophet like unto Christ, (Acts iii. 22.)

There are those, trusting in their own inherent or imparted ability to meet the requisitions of divine justice, who appear to think and even desire it to be their duty to brave this element of wrath themselves; as the self-confident apostle seems to have supposed the evidence of his Master’s power to consist in enabling the disciple to walk upon the stormy wave, Matt. xiv. 28. Others think to wash away their sins by inflicting penalties upon themselves, or by doing for themselves some great thing; and, like the swine beset by a legion, Mark v. 9–13, become the immediate instruments of their own destruction. Some allusion may be made to this error, Heb. x. 22 where the figurative expression of *pure water* is employed apparently in con-

tradistinction to sea-water, which is both foul and bitter—the “troubled sea casting up mire and dirt,” (Is. lvii. 20.) The apostle had just set before the Hebrews the new and living way of coming into the *position* of the holiest, by the blood and flesh of Jesus, which means of access he afterwards speaks of as a cleansing of the conscience, and a washing of the body in *pure water*; an opposite of pretended propitiations, bearing the *bloody* character of the legal dispensation, (Ex. iv. 25, 26.)

The sea, in its third or spiritual sense, was manifested to be blood. In its first, or natural sense, the sea is a fearful and destructive element. In a metaphorical sense, it is said to represent a deluge, or multitude of enemies, (Cruden :) but perhaps its second scriptural sense is that of the penal requisitions of the Mosaical economy, as commonly applied to the Jews; while the third sense represents the vindictive bearing of inflexible Justice, applicable throughout eternity to “every soul of man that doeth evil.”

§ 197. ‘And the third (part) of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died.’—Were manifested to be without life. Things in the sea having life, we may suppose to signify things dependent upon the sea for life. The sea, having become blood, is no more capable of giving life to its dependents; so when the legal or self-righteous element of purging away sin is manifestly destitute of the power of giving eternal life, every principle dependent upon it must be equally manifested to be destitute of a life-giving power. The penal observances of the Mosaical dispensation are now shown to be incapable of yielding life to the sinner; and so, in a spiritual sense, the efforts of man to atone for his own transgressions are manifested to be without efficacy in the work of salvation. As the sinner is dead under the law in trespasses and sins, so the principles of legality, when the truth is fully revealed, will appear equally lifeless.

Fish, it is true, furnish a common article of diet; but these are fish frequenting rivers, or the mouths of rivers, or feeding upon banks in the vicinity of shores. The fish of the ocean, it is notorious, are not suitable for the sustenance of man: besides, fish to be eaten must be taken alive from the waters. There is with all persons a natural abhorrence of fish supposed to be dead before it is taken; and if the water of a lake or sea become so deleterious as to destroy the fish in it, it is very evident that these fish are no more fit for food.

It is a peculiarity worth noticing, that fish, although used for food, were not employed for sacrificial purposes, under the levitical arrangement; as if the element represented by the sea, could not furnish a suitable offering to the Lord. Even as an article of diet, fish seem to be mentioned, Numbers xi. 5, in contradistinction to heavenly food: “We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks,

and the onions, and the garlic, (vegetables peculiarly earthy.) But now our soul is dried away ; there is nothing, besides this manna, before our eyes." As some, in the pride of their hearts, call to mind the various theories of human invention upon which they had been encouraged to build the hope of a merit of their own. They repine over the gospel exhibition in its simplicity, because nothing, as a means of eternal life, but the imputed righteousness of a Divine Redeemer, is presented for their contemplation. They prefer the food of a state of bondage to the nourishment of a father's table.

§ 198. 'And the third (part) of the ships were destroyed.'—Ships are human means of preservation and safe conduct. They represent another class of self-righteous principles, or refuges of lies, to which presumptuous man resorts, in view of the retributive action of divine justice. Trusting to ships, Ps. xlviii. 7, and trusting to horses, Is. xxx. 16, are both figures of misplaced confidence in vain and insufficient means of escape from the wrath to come. Ships are also the inventions of men for carrying on trade, and for acquiring wealth. Their employment represents the operation of a mercenary system, in the acquisition of that which is the opposite of the *true riches*. Ships are also a species of ark—as the ships of Tarshish, Is. ii. 16, appear to be figurative opposites of the ship or ark of Noah, a type of Christ : this ark being something of divine construction, built under divine direction, and by faith availed of, (Heb. xi. 7 ;) while self-righteous systems are ships of human construction. The insufficiency of ships or vessels to withstand a mighty tempest, is typical of the insufficiency of any merit or merits of man to meet the storm of divine wrath. To be *in Christ*, is to be in the only ark of safety.

The first sense of ships is sufficiently obvious. The second sense may be metaphorical merely as applicable to means of safety in general, or, more strictly, as applied to legal observances in a literal sense ; the third or last construction being the supposed means of salvation furnished by human efforts to supply a meritorious propitiation, in place of that to be found in the atonement of Christ.

The general destruction of earthly objects, manifested at the blowing of these trumpets, appears to be alluded to, Zeph. i. 2 and 3, under a figure somewhat different : "I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the Lord. I will consume man and beast ; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fish of the sea, and the stumbling-blocks from the wicked."

Vs. 10, 11. And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third (part) of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters ; and the name

Καὶ ὁ τρίτος ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισε, καὶ ἔπε-  
σεν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀστὴρ μέγας καίόμενος  
ὡς λαμπάς, καὶ ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ τὸ τρίτον τῶν  
ποταμῶν καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς πηγὰς τῶν ὑδάτων.



of the star is called Wormwood : and the third (part) of the waters became wormwood ; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

Καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ ἀστέρος λέγεται ὁ ἄφρων-  
θος. καὶ γίνεταί τὸ τρίτον τῶν ὑδάτων εἰς  
ἄφροντον, καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀπέθα-  
νον ἐκ τῶν ὑδάτων, ὅτι ἐπικράνησαν.

§ 199. ‘ And there fell a great star,’ &c.—It is said, Is. lxii. 1, “ For Zion’s sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a *lamp* that burneth ;” and Ps. cxix. 105, “ Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my paths.”

The star here described is not, like the mountain, itself in a state of combustion, as about being consumed ; but it is burning *like* a lamp, to give light ; and is for this reason compared to an immense lamp, throwing forth, as we may suppose, its light upon all around it. It resembles a lamp in its *burning* for the purpose of giving light.

The word translated *fell* is used in Scripture in a variety of senses. There appears to be no necessity for taking it here in the sense of an ejection from heaven, and consequent degradation. As the manna fell from heaven, as the seed sown fell on the ground, and as the Holy Spirit fell upon the converts in the times of the apostles, so this star we may suppose to come from heaven to earth as a communication of light, to give light wherever it is needed.

It was a great star—an immense lighted lamp—a powerful instrument of developing truth, and of detecting falsehood, or of exhibiting errors of doctrine in their true character : the apocalyptic heaven we take to be an exhibition of the economy of salvation, such as it is in truth. This star from heaven is accordingly some important portion of truth emanating from the heavenly display.

§ 200. ‘ And it fell upon the third of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters.’—Rivers and fountains furnish means of ablution and of sustenance ; but these rivers are rivers of the earth, and these waters are waters of the earth. They are supposed means of propitiation, belonging to the earthly system ; streams emanating from the earthly scheme of salvation—of the earth, earthy—opposites of the pure river of the water of life, Rev. xxii. 1, and of the fountain coming forth of the house of the Lord, Joel iii. 18. The light of truth thrown upon these self-righteous and legal means of propitiation, causes them to appear in their true character. Bitter as the waters of the sea are bitter ;—bitter as the waters of Marah. The terms sweet and bitter, when applied to water in Eastern phraseology, being equivalent to our designation of fresh and salt water. These earthly waters are thus manifested to be incapable of furnishing the means of eternal life, or of cleansing the soul from the pollution of sin.

We may suppose, for example, in a certain scheme of salvation of a

legal character, the elements of sorrow for sin, resolutions of amendment, remorse, self-mortification, endurance of some specific suffering, some self-inflicted chastisement ; all or any of them to be set forth as means of propitiation. A development of divine truth, brought into contact with this mistaken view, exhibits the exceeding sinfulness of sin ; showing the immensity of suffering required to atone for the transgressions of the sinner, and the consequent inadequacy of any human means of salvation of the character supposed ; at the same time showing the extreme bitterness of such a process, the bitterness of the sorrow, of the remorse, and of the suffering required. The nature of the pretended propitiation is not changed by this development, but its true character is exhibited. The disciple, brought to compare the gospel means of ablution (the atonement of Christ) with these vain pretensions, perceives his error ; the rivers and waters he trusted in now appear to him, as they are, bitter waters, unfit either for cleansing or for diet. These refuges of lies are thus swept away, and the now enlightened believer is prepared to cast himself without reserve upon the merits of Him who is described to be as rivers of water in a dry place, (Is. xxxii. 2.)

§ 201. ‘ And the name of the star is called Wormwood,’ (Absinthe.)—So named, not as a matter of reproach, but on account of the design and effect of its mission. Wormwood itself, when administered as a medicine, strengthens the stomach, and creates an appetite for wholesome food ; so the bitter quality of this star is benignly intended to create a desire for the bread of life—a hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

The same Greek term, *ἄψιρθος*, does not occur in the Septuagint, (Concord. Trommii,) although our translators have rendered another *πικρία*, bitterness, by *wormwood*, Lam. iii. 15. We may, perhaps, safely consider bitterness, wormwood, and gall, synonymous terms. The people of Israel, on account of their idolatrous conduct, were to be fed with *wormwood*, or bitterness, and water of gall was to be given them to drink ; so it is with those who reject the sweet water of a Saviour’s atonement, and place their trust in some merit of their own bodily or mental suffering. They shut themselves up to a dependence upon these waters of bitterness ; nor do they perceive the folly of their choice, till enlightened by a further revelation of gospel truth. This revelation may appear to them a messenger of bitterness, by its exhibition of their real position, but it is nevertheless a messenger of mercy. The wormwood and water of gall given the Israelites for *food*, were instruments of judicial chastisement : the bitterness of the star *Absinthe* is designed as a medicine, and a preparation for better food ;—turning the disciple from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan, the accuser, to God, Jehovah our righteousness.

A sorrow for sin, bitter as it may be, to which the disciple trusts, as to a propitiation, is a sorrow of the world that worketh death ; but a sorrow

for sin convincing the disciple of his need of a Saviour, and constraining him to fly for safety to the hope set before him in that Saviour's atonement, is a godly sorrow, working a *change of mind*, a repentance unto life—a change not to be changed—a repentance not to be repented of, (§ 44.)

It is said of the children of Israel, Exod. i. 14, "The Egyptians made their lives *bitter*;" so the position of bondage under the law engenders bitterness of soul; yet the law is good and benign, for although it brings the knowledge of sin, it is also a leader to bring us to Christ. So the passover was to be eaten standing—staff in hand—with bitter herbs, showing that no time is to be lost between a conviction of sin and a participation by faith in the merits of Him who, as a paschal lamb, was slain for us.

'The *third* (part) of the waters became wormwood;'—that is, the waters spiritually understood, became bitter. So of the fountains of the waters in the preceding verse: it is not said the third of the fountains, but we may take the figure of *the fountains*, as connected with the waters, to be equivalent to the third of the waters—that is, the waters in their most important spiritual sense, as the fountain gives its character to the stream.

'And many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.'—As the star is not a material star, and as the rivers and fountains are not material objects, so neither are the men who died literally men; nor is the death in contemplation a literal death. The men we suppose to be elements of the earthly system, manifested to be without life and incapable of giving life—the exhibition of the bitterness of these fallacious systems, showing the deadly character of the elements of the earthly scheme of redemption; these mistaken elements of propitiation resulting in condemnation instead of deliverance.

V. 12. And the fourth angel sounded, and the third (part) of the sun was smitten, and the third (part) of the moon, and the third (part) of the stars; so as the third (part) of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third (part) of it, and the night likewise.

Καὶ ὁ τέταρτος ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισε, καὶ ἐπλήγη τὸ τρίτον τοῦ ἡλίου καὶ τὸ τρίτον τῆς σελήνης καὶ τὸ τρίτον τῶν ἀστέρων, ἵνα σκοτισθῇ τὸ τρίτον αὐτῶν, καὶ ἡ ἡμέρα μὴ φαίνῃ τὸ τρίτον αὐτῆς, καὶ ἡ νύξ ὁμοίως.

'And the third (part) of the sun,' &c.—The more particulars we have of this *third*, the more evident it is that the word *part*, in our ordinary acceptance of the term, does not express its meaning. If the third part of the heavenly bodies, or of each of them, were eclipsed, it would not prevent the day and night shining, they would only shine with one-third less light; and if we suppose them to be darkened one-third of the time successively, so that there should be daylight only eight hours instead of twelve, the same construction could not be applied to what is said of the third of the earth, sea, rivers, &c. And as a fountain cannot send forth at the same time both bitter water and fresh, so neither can we divide the light of day or night,



that one-third part of it may be light, and the other two-thirds dark at the same time.

We can only get over this difficulty by supposing this *third* to refer, as we have suggested, (§ 191,) to something like a third sense. The sounding of this fourth trumpet we accordingly presume to manifest this whole *solar* system, in its spiritual or third sense, to be devoid of the light of righteousness; the *third* spoken of being, not the third of the spiritual sense, but the whole of the thing represented in that sense, which is its third, or the third of it.

We say this *solar* system, to adapt the expression to our modern views of the organization of the sun, moon, and planets; but in the times of the apostles the common opinion was that the sun was created for the earth, and not the earth for the sun—that the earth was the centre around which the sun and all the heavenly bodies revolved. What we now call the *solar*, would then have been considered the terrestrial system, or the earthly system. Whatever name we give it, however, we suppose the system itself to have three senses: the physical or natural sense; the figurative sense, as applied to the Jewish economy, or to the organization of the visible church on earth, and matters connected with it; and thirdly, the spiritual sense, as applied to the economy of salvation, of which the Jewish or Levitical economy, or visible church, is but a type. In this spiritual or third sense, however, the system we have in view is not a heavenly, but an earthly system; the difference between the two being as great at least as that between the ancient apprehension of this portion of the science of astronomy, and our modern views of it.

This terrene-solar system, as we may call it, exhibits man's views of the economy of salvation: this *solar* system, in its third or spiritual sense, is an exhibition of the economy of salvation, but it is such as man's judgment forms of it. The system has a *sun*: it has a righteousness belonging to it, but it is not the sun of *divine* righteousness. It supposes in effect a sun of self-righteousness: it has a moon, but this moon is supposed to shine with a light of its own: and it has its planets, but they are all supposed to be independent bodies, shining with their own light. The sun of this system is supposed to *impart* light, but it is not supposed to *impute* light. As in the common apprehension of mankind, while every one is sensible that the rays of the sun are required to enlighten this earth, so that its inhabitants may pursue their avocations, it scarcely occurs to the minds of any that whatever light or splendour this planet may exhibit to other worlds, it is not a light of its own, but only the reflected light of the sun to which it is indebted for all its beauty. Man, too, individually rejoices in the light of the sun, and prides himself upon his outward appearance; but while admitting his dependence upon this light to enable him to perform his duties, he rarely recollects that he is indebted to the reflected rays of the same source

of light for all the beauty or perfection of his appearance in the sight of his fellow-mortals.

Analogous with this, we suppose the system of divine things spoken of here as the third of the sun, moon, and stars, to be the system or economy of salvation in human apprehension—a system admitting the necessity of divine aid to enable man to perform his duty, and so far permitting the Deity to come in for a share of the glory of what the creature may perform ; but a system into which the idea of *imputed* moral perfection is not allowed to enter. The self-righteous have their economy of salvation, their heaven, and their sun of righteousness, as they have also their rock and their vine ; but more enlightened believers may say of them, their heaven is not as our heaven—their sun is not as our sun—nor is their rock as our rock, our enemies themselves being judges ; their vine is the vine of Sodom, and the fields of Gomorrah—their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter, (Deut. xxxii. 31, 32.)

This mistaken view of God's plan of salvation, manifested by the action on the stars, we suppose to be void of light, or of the essential ingredient of righteousness ; a manifestation resulting from the sounding of the fourth trumpet, which sounding it is to be presumed characterizes some peculiar development of truth.

§ 203. There are three that bear witness in the earth : the spirit, the water, and the blood, 1 John v. 8 ; the water of baptism, the material blood of Christ, and his blood, in a spiritual sense, or his atonement. So we may say, first, there is a natural or literal sun ; second, a metaphorical sun, Christ in the flesh ; and third, a spiritual sun, Jehovah our righteousness : all three of these indicating the same divine object in his relation towards the subjects of his redeeming mercy—"For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD (Jehovah) will give grace and glory," Ps. lxxxiv. 11.

The natural sun does not cease to exist when eclipsed ; he still shines to other worlds ; so Jehovah is ever the same, although we may not see him as our Sun, clothing us with the light of his perfection, or although we may substitute in our vain imaginations some other source of light in his place, and even conceive ourselves suns, and thus walk in the sparks of our own kindling. In this apocalyptic exhibition we do not suppose the true spiritual heaven to be darkened, but it is the heaven of human estimation substituted for the true, which is manifested to be as it is without light. The same manifestation appears to be contemplated in the declaration, Ezekiel xxxii, 7, "I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark ; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light : all the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord God." The prophecy is immediately applicable to Egypt, but it is evident that this Egypt must be some object in a spiritual

sense, of which the literal Egypt was a type ; Assyria, Egypt, and Judea, being perhaps three successive types of the same exhibition of truth : Is. xix. 24.

We suppose the prediction to allude to the manifestation of darkness, rather than to the fact of darkness ; because the fact has always been the same since the creation of the world. Men have loved darkness rather than light ; they have called darkness light ; their minds have been blinded, yet while blind they supposed themselves to see. The great change to be brought about, is to show them that the light they imagine to be in them is darkness. So, preceding the perfect development of divine truth, the preparatory step is probably to manifest the existing degree of darkness—as, according to Paul, the manifestation of the man of sin is to be the immediate prelude to the coming of Christ.

The action of this fourth trumpet thus corresponds with that called for Joel ii. 1, 2, “ Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain : let all the inhabitants of the land tremble ; for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand ; a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness ;” and iii. 15, “ The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining.” So Zeph. i. 14–16, “ The great day of the Lord is near—it is near, and hasteth greatly—even the voice of the day of the Lord : the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers.”

§ 204. ‘ The day shone not, and the night likewise,’ or in like manner. —While Jesus Christ was in the world, his followers metaphorically had the light with them, John xii. 35–46. So, in an exhibition of the economy of salvation, where Christ is seen as Jehovah our righteousness, there is light in a spiritual sense ; without this there must be a stumbling upon the dark mountains—upon stumbling-blocks of error—false foundations of hope.

The day shone not, because, in the exhibition of this system, a sun of righteousness was no longer seen. The night shone not, because the moon, representing the church, or the economy of salvation, exhibited no clothing of *imputed* righteousness ; and being without any righteousness in herself, was manifested to be, in a spiritual sense, as in a physical, merely an opaque body. The stars may be figures of elements of other systems, or they may be put for planets, corresponding in character with the moon. We do not suppose it necessary here to analyze the figures minutely ; the predominant idea calling for attention being that of a total darkness. Day and night signifying not a period of time, but a position, intellectually, of light or knowledge ; spiritually, of righteousness or moral perfection. So the land



of darkness, and of the shadow of death, Job x. 22, we suppose to represent the position of the sinner under the law, and obnoxious to its penalties, as he is in fact, or as he supposes himself to be. The region of the shadow of death, and the valley of the shadow of death, expressing the same position of destitution ; to provide against which the sinner can only trust in Christ as the Lord his righteousness, enabling him to say with the Psalmist, " Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me," Ps. xxiii. 4.

It is not necessary for us to ascribe the state of darkness we have been contemplating to any particular period in the history of the church. It is something experienced by every convert ere the day dawn, and the day-star arise in his heart. Perhaps in a spiritual sense there is as much of this darkness amongst us of the present day, who say *we see*, as there was amongst those of the middle ages, whose blindness we are apt to look upon with so much proud commiseration.

The sounding of the fourth angel's trumpet is not said to be followed with an appearance of clouds, but, from a comparison of the passage with that quoted from Ezekiel, the instrument of obscuration may be presumed to be the same.

Clouds emanate from the earth through the action of the sun, whose rays they at the same time intercept. So the misconceptions of revealed truth, arising from a literal construction, prevent the discernment of that truth. The revelation emanates from on high, but the misconceptions originate, like vapours, from an earthly source. Were there no sun, there would be no exhalation ; and if there were no revelation, there would be no misconstruction ; but the same sun which causes the vapour to arise, dissipates the cloud : the Sun of righteousness is to rise, with healing in his wings. The truth will then be manifested, and God's exhibition of his plan of mercy, may then be apostrophized in the language of the prophet : " Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people ; but the Lord shall arise upon *thee*, and his glory shall be seen upon thee," Is. lx. 1, 3.

## THE HERALD OF WO.

V. 13. And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Wo, wo, wo, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound.

Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἤκουσα ἑνὸς ἀετοῦ πετομένου ἐν μεσουρανήματι, λέγοντος φωνῇ μεγάλῃ· οὐαὶ, οὐαὶ, οὐαὶ τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ἐκ τῶν λοιπῶν φωνῶν τῆς σάλπιγγος τῶν τριῶν ἀγγέλων τῶν μελλόντων σαλπίζειν.

§ 205. An angel, or eagle, according to some editions. If an angel, a messenger, or ministering spirit ; if an eagle, the figure of a communication

of the Holy Spirit, or Comforter, (§ 128.) The distinction is not material. The warning voice is that of some instrument of interpretation, directing attention to the three subsequent developments as causes of apprehension ; not to all beings, but to those denominated “inhabiters of the earth.” That is, as we suppose, elements of the earthly system—doctrinal principles, dependent upon the earthly scheme of redemption, or upon the earthly view or construction of the divine scheme.

Flying through the midst of heaven, or through the *middle heaven*, or perhaps we may say the *second* heaven ; that is, the exhibition of divine truth afforded by the revelation of the Old and New Testaments, taken in their ordinary sense : the spiritual construction of the same revelation being equivalent, as we have suggested, (§ 192, 193,) to that which Paul describes as the third heaven.

An angel flying through the mid-heaven, is thus the figure of a spirit of interpretation running through the whole Scriptures, and virtually pronouncing the *woes* alluded to, as something particularly destructive to these earthly elements, or principles ; every preparation for this destruction having been previously made, as indicated in the exhibitions attending the sounding of the four previous trumpets. The destruction *spiritually* of the earth, of the trees, and the green herbage ; the bloody appearance of the sea, with its fatal action upon every thing in it ; the destruction of the ships, the bitterness of the rivers and fountains of the earth, and the deleterious qualities of their waters, together with the state of universal darkness, or manifest absence of every element of divine righteousness, all show a state of things incapable of affording a refuge or shelter. The wrath itself has not yet been exhibited against these inhabitors, but the impossibility of escaping has been shown—all retreat has been cut off ; and in this desperate position, the objects “fitted to destruction” await the impending visitation.

These *inhabiters* of the earth we suppose to be the principles of the earthly system—the peculiar objects of wrath—principles dependent upon this fallacious system, as the inhabitants of the earth are literally dependent upon the globe which they inhabit ; and principles dependent upon subordinate elements, as the inhabitants of this globe are literally dependent upon its productions for life and protection. These subordinate principles, or subordinate earthly elements, are now taken away. It is therefore against the distinguishing and most important of these doctrinal elements, with their systems, that the action of coming wrath remains to be exhibited ; this last class of elements bearing the same comparative relations to the first, that the human race bears to the rest of created things belonging to the earth, animate and inanimate. We must ascertain, however, from the action of these coming woes, who or what are the subjects of this fearful denunciation.

The heavenly messenger uttering this premonition of the scenes to be exhibited, apparently occupies the place of an interlocutory personage in a dramatic representation, indicating a pause, or separation ; equivalent to the introduction of a new act, not however as of something succeeding the previous scenes, but as of something which may have been in operation at the same time, although separately contemplated. The parties engaged in the new exhibition being different in some measure from those before represented, but the action in both cases being contemporaneous. We must suspend our judgment on this point, however, for the present.



## CHAPTER IX.

## FIRST WO—THE SCORPION LOCUSTS.

Vs. 1, 2. And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

Καὶ ὁ πέμπτος ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισε, καὶ εἶδον ἀστέρα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ πεπτωκίᾳ εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἡ κλεῖς τοῦ φρεάτος τῆς ἀβύσσου· καὶ ἤνοιξε τὸ φρεᾶρ τῆς ἀβύσσου. καὶ ἀνέβη καπνὸς ἐκ τοῦ φρεάτος ὡς καπνὸς καμίνου μεγάλης, καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ὁ ἥλιος καὶ ὁ ἀὴρ ἐκ τοῦ καπνοῦ τοῦ φρεάτος.

§ 206. ‘And the fifth angel sounded.’—Here there appears to be a partial change of scenery in the foreground of the exhibition; the succession of trumpet representations being resumed.

‘I saw a star fall,’ &c.—As we noticed, in remarking upon the star *Wormwood*, the word translated *fall* does not necessarily involve the idea of degradation, (§ 199.) The expression occurs in the Scriptures only in these two passages. A star, an instrument of light, comes from heaven to earth. A revelation from the heavenly system is brought into contact, or into juxtaposition, with the earthly system. Some important principle of interpretation, perhaps, is evolved from the heavenly exhibition and applied to the earthly, so as to become the means of exposing certain errors or fallacies of this latter scheme.

‘To him was given the key.’—That is, to the star, the heavenly messenger, not to the fifth angel. As already suggested, (§§ 37, 89,) we suppose a key to be the figure of a power to open or reveal a mystery. To this star or instrument of revelation is given, allotted, or committed the function of developing the mystery, figuratively termed the *bottomless pit*; showing the destructive character, or baleful tendency of its principles.

‘Of the bottomless pit,’ or verbatim, of the pit of the bottomless; the shaft of the profound deep, or infinite deep, or deep without a bottom.—The Greek word *φρεᾶρ*, signifies a pit of any kind; the word *ἀβύσσος*, connected with it in the genitive, is expressive of something without a bottom; of which there is of course no end to the depth, (Rob. Lex. 2, 114,) *infinitæ profunditatis vorago*, ex a priv. and Ion. *βύσσος* pro *βύθος fundum*, (bottom,) Suiceri. Lex. We have adopted the term *abyss* in English, applying it to any supposed bottomless gulf. The same Greek term, Luke viii. 31, expresses a lake or sea; and Rom. x. 7, the place of the dead, or

the opposite of heaven. So we sometimes speak of the ocean, from its immense depth, hyperbolically, as the abyss, or bottomless. In the Old Testament the Hebrew term, expressed in our common version by the deep, the depths, and sometimes the *sea*, is rendered in the Septuagint by *abyss* and *abysses*, as an equivalent, or something more than an equivalent of the term sea or seas, (θάλασσα.)

The compound term *pit of the abyss*, occurs nowhere else in the sacred writings. The Greek term rendered pit here, is employed in common with λάκκος in the Septuagint, for the rendering of a Hebrew term signifying pit, well, and cistern. We must judge therefore of the pit, or shaft, by that which is connected with it. Here the pit of the abyss is the passage leading to that which is without a bottom; the key of the pit corresponding with the key of a door or gate.

A pit is the opposite of a rock or mountain; and a pit leading down to a chasm of infinite depth, or without a bottom, must be the converse of a mount, or hill, or any structure having a solid foundation. As the abyss or *deep* is an opposite of heaven, (Rom. x. 7,) so the key of the entrance of the abyss may be considered an opposite of the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and as we suppose the kingdom of heaven to be a figure of the system or economy of salvation, so we may suppose this abyss to be put for an opposite system—a system of salvation affording no basis or foundation—a system placing the disciple in the position of one who is in a bottomless pit without a foothold, without a rock or stone upon which to build his hope of escape. As the shaft of a dry well or a miry pit is the opposite of a well of living water, so an abyss is a figure the opposite of that of a city which hath foundations, (Heb. xi. 10;) or perhaps, more strictly, the pit is an opposite of the city, and the abyss the opposite of the foundations of the city; Christ being the foundation of the city system, and the pit system being entirely bottomless. It is of course a system which does not exhibit Christ as the foundation, stone, or rock, upon which the disciple's faith is to rest.

The position peculiar to a system of this character must be one of legal condemnation, without a hope of escape; the miserable occupant of this position being *out of Christ*, under the law, obnoxious to its penalties, without a righteousness of his own, convicted of sin, and without a Saviour. To such a peculiar position repeated allusion is made in the Old Testament, in view of the gracious provision of redeeming mercy: "He keepeth back his soul from the pit;" "Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom," Job xxxiii. 18 and 24; "He brought me out of the horrible pit, and set my foot upon a rock," Ps. xl. 2; and Is. li. 1, "Look to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged"—look back to the desperate condition in which you were placed by nature when, under the law, depend-

ent upon your own merits, there was no intercessor, and none to help, (Is. lix. 16.)

§ 207. ‘And he opened the bottomless pit.’—This mystery of iniquity is now being developed; its principles are to be brought forth, and their true nature exhibited. This exhibition, too, constitutes the first *wo*—a *wo* falling upon the inhabitants of the earth, or upon the elements of the *earthly* view of the economy of divine government.

‘And there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace.’—The peculiar employment of a *furnace* is that of testing the purity of metals: “The fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; but the Lord trieth the hearts,” Prov. xvii. 3. The feet of the Son of man, Rev. i. 15, appeared as if they burned in a furnace. So the bush (Ex. iii. 2) burned with fire, but was not consumed,—as truth may be subjected to the most powerful scrutiny without being impaired by it.

The appearance of smoke from a furnace is an indication that the process of trial by combustion is in operation. The smoke of a great furnace indicates the magnitude of this trial. The fire which is to try every man’s work, (1 Cor. iii. 13,) we may suppose to be here employed. Not that the pit itself is a furnace, but that there is a trial going on with the elements of this pit system, which is like that of a furnace. We are not obliged to suppose this trial to have just commenced as the pit was opened. It may have been previously in operation, but the unlocking and opening of the pit shows now what was before concealed. The tares were suffered to grow with the wheat until the harvest, that the characteristics of both becoming more prominent and decided, as they advanced to maturity, the necessary discrimination, at the proper time, might more easily be made. So, while the advocates of truth are lamenting the prevalence of erroneous views and doctrines, the test of the divine crucible is being applied. The process of discrimination is going on, although the manifestation of the process and of its results may be reserved for a distant period.

§ 208. ‘And the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.’—Smoke is the unavoidable accompaniment of a trial by fire, and where there is a great smoke all objects of vision beyond it are necessarily obscured. During the trial undergone by the elements of this pit system, in the nature of the case there is an obscuration of the heavenly bodies. This, perhaps, is one of the means requisite for rendering the elements of the pit system more prominent and distinguishable; as we often find it to be not till the effect of certain errors has reached an extreme in the concealment of truth, that we are fully convinced of their mischievous tendency.

‘The sun was darkened.’—The emanation from the bottomless pit system, while under trial, manifests its tendency to obscure the Sun of right-



eousness—to hide from the eye of faith the important truth that the Lord God is a sun and shield. The Saviour no longer appearing as *Jehovah our righteousness*, the disciple sees no refuge from the terrors of the law; and thus the smoke of the pit and the smoke of Sinai correspond in their results, (Ex. xx. 18.)

The atmosphere is darkened.—This emanation, or exhalation, from the pit affects the medium through which heavenly things or the truths of the Gospel are contemplated. The exhibition of the economy of grace is not perceptible in consequence of, and during the emanation from, the pit.

This darkening of the heavens corresponds with the effect produced by the star Wormwood, as also with the results of the opening of the sixth seal, (Rev. vi. 12, 13,) showing these changes not to be successive and accumulative, as following one upon another, but to be each of them distinct and independent pictures. We are not to imagine the sun first black as sackcloth of hair, and then, in addition to this, one third of it to be smitten, and then to be further darkened by the smoke; but we are to take each of these representations as separate illustrations, not immediately connected with each other, although perhaps applicable to the same truths—each seal, each trumpet, &c., furnishing a series of figures of its own.

The Greek term *αἴρ*, translated *air*, is said to be applicable especially to the thick atmosphere encompassing the earth, in contradistinction to the pure air *αἰθήρ*, (ether,) supposed to pervade the celestial regions beyond the attraction of this material globe, (Jones's Lex.,) our own gross atmosphere representing, perhaps, an imperfect medium of contemplating revealed truth—a literal construction, or a mode of interpretation encumbered with literal and erroneous apprehensions. Accordingly, we find the spirit working in the children of disobedience denominated, Eph. ii. 2, the prince of the power of the *air*, *ἀέρος*, the foul atmosphere. This medium of vision, encumbered as it is in its own nature, is rendered still more dense by the exhalations from the pit.

V. 3. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

Καὶ ἐκ τοῦ καπνοῦ ἐξῆλθον ἀντίδες εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐταῖς ἐξουσία ὡς ἔχουσιν ἐξουσίαν οἱ σκορπίοι τῆς γῆς.

§ 209. 'And there came out of the smoke locusts,' &c.—Here we have the characteristics of the principles of the pit system, as they are evolved by the refining process whence the smoke originates. The principles of this bottomless system are tried as with fire—subjected to a test—to ascertain their true character, nature, and tendency. They are permitted to operate, and power is given them to develope themselves, that their peculiar features may be fully exhibited.

The locust was one of the plagues of Egypt; it was probably an

unclean animal Levitically—a flying creeping thing with four feet, an abomination. The locust permitted to be eaten, being designated in the Hebrew by a different appellation from that given to the destructive plague,\* and being elsewhere rendered in our common version by the term grasshopper, Lev. xi. 23. Locusts were remarkable, it is said, not only for their voracity and vast numbers, but also for their infectious touch, and the deleterious effects of their dead bodies upon the atmosphere. Hence they have been supposed to represent in Revelation “authors or teachers of false doctrines, who infect others by distilling their poisonous doctrines into them,” (Cruden.) We suppose them rather to represent the elements or principles of such doctrines, in conformity with our general rule of interpretation. Not that these false principles are strictly and literally as multitudinous as an army of locusts, but that they are sufficiently so to admit of the *hyperbole* in a description of them.

Egypt was a land of bondage ; as such it was a type of the position of man by nature under the law, and dependent upon his own merits. A locust plague apparently is designed to represent a spiritual plague or legal consequence peculiar to this position of bondage. As an unclean animal, the locust may represent certain pretended merits of man resulting from legal observances ; as an unclean animal armed with a *sting*, they represent these elements of merit, involving, as they necessarily must, the *sting* of death or sin, the strength or power of which is in the law.

‘And unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.’—The natural action of the locust is upon the vegetable productions of the earth, injuring man only indirectly, by depriving him of the means of sustaining life—acting upon the green covering of the earth as the moth acts upon the woollen garment, showing its corruptibility. The one figure illustrating the insufficiency of all human merits as a means of eternal life ; the other the nothingness of every righteousness of human fabric as a garment of salvation.

But besides their natural action, a special power is given to these locusts—a power compared to that of the scorpions of the earth.

Scorpions are bred and nourished amidst the corruption of the earth. They are generally found under and amidst stony rubbish and old ruins. Their power is in their sting—deprived of this, they are harmless animals, incapable even of self-defence ; but their sting is exceedingly venomous, producing most excruciating, torturing pain : the wound not generally mortal, but capable of becoming so, especially where there is a predisposition to mortification, unless a remedy be speedily provided. In this respect

\* אַרְבֵּי אֶרֶץ *Arbei, Locusta*, Ex. X. אַרְבֵּי אֶרֶץ *Arbei Locusta etiam cicada*, Lev. xi. 22. Trommii. Con. Tom. I. 62.

they resemble the serpent—the venom of the sting being the same in kind, but differing in degree. A difference perhaps comparable to that between the action of the conscience of a criminal before he is brought to justice, and the action of the public prosecutor in bringing about his apprehension and condemnation.

Scorpions, as generated from the earth, and drawing the poison of their stings from the earth, represent principles of the earthly system, drawing their tendency to condemnation from the system to which they belong. The sting of death is sin: the sting of the great serpent (the accuser) results in death or legal condemnation. The sting of the scorpion conscience tortures and torments, although it may not produce condemnation till the accuser's power is brought into action. The strength of sin is the law: there would be no sting or power to destroy in sin if there were no law; because without law there could be no transgression, and sin, strictly speaking, is the transgression of the law. The earthly system we suppose to be a legal system; the scorpion principle is an element of this earthly system, and draws his power to sting, torture, and torment, from the legality of that system.

These locust-principles, therefore, originating from the bottomless pit system, have the power of bringing the law to act upon the conscience—convincing of sin, showing the sinner's destitution of righteousness or merit—producing a state of torture next only in degree to that of actual condemnation. To them was given, that is, to them it was allotted—such was the part assigned them. It was designed to manifest that these bottomless pit elements possess in fact this legal sting; showing these principles to be in effect of the same character and tendency as those of the legal dispensation, in the most extensive acceptance of the term. The subject affected by this scorpion sting is operated upon as an individual under the law is affected by the power of accusation: the elements of corruption within him, and the accusing power of the principles of his own earthly system, as locusts manifesting his destitution of all merit, depriving him of every refuge; and, as scorpions, bringing him into a position of positive transgression, threatening him with immediate legal death or condemnation.

Vs. 4, 5. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

*Kaì ἐδόθη αὐταῖς, ἵνα μὴ ἀδικήσωσι τὸν χέρσιον τῆς γῆς, οὐδὲ πᾶν χλωρόν, οὐδὲ πᾶν δένδρον, εἰ μὴ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, οἵτινες οὐκ ἔχουσι τὴν σφραγίδα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν. Καὶ ἐδόθη αὐταῖς, ἵνα μὴ ἀποκτείνωσιν αὐτούς, ἀλλ' ἵνα βασανισθῶσι μῆνας πέντε· καὶ ὁ βασανισμὸς αὐτῶν ὡς βασανισμὸς σκορπίου, ὅταν παύσῃ ἄνθρωπον.*



§ 210 ‘And it was commanded them that they should not hurt,’ &c.—The term rendered *hurt*, we have already shown to signify something the opposite of *justifying*, (§ 174,) or of manifesting a person or thing to be just. We suppose the action of these locusts to represent the operation of the principles of a certain system in showing the incompatibility of other principles with the process of justification; these other principles being those figuratively denominated *inhabiters of the earth*—principles of the earthly system, the insufficiency of which is shown by the operation of the elements of the bottomless pit system. Of these inhabters of the earth, however, the one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed ones are exceptions; all the rest spoken of as men are subject to the action of the locusts, (§ 175;) although the natural propensity of these locusts to destroy vegetable productions is restrained, and their force is directed only against things figuratively designated as men not sealed. We are not to suppose the prohibition as to the grass and every green thing to exhibit these productions of the earth as subjects of favour. At the first trumpet’s sound all *green grass* was burnt up, under the visitation of hail and fire mingled with blood cast upon the earth. This prohibition, therefore, only shows the action of the locust-principles to be confined to certain objects, leaving other unsealed objects equally fitted for destruction subject to the action of other instruments of judicial visitation. The part assigned to the locust was to operate upon one class of beings only; we must look elsewhere to ascertain the fate of any other class or classes.\*

‘And it was given to them that they should not slay them, but that they should be tormented (tortured) five months.’—The part allotted to the locusts was not to destroy, but only to *try* or to put to the *test*. The word translated *torment* signifying the kind of torture used in extorting confession from accused persons, when subjected to the rack; the term being derived from the name of a stone (*βάσανος, lapis Lydius*) employed in testing the purity of metals, indicating the alloy with which they may be mixed, (Rob. Lex. 101.)

\* Some editions of the Greek have the word *μόρους* after *ἀνθρώπων*, and Leusden renders the passage *nisi homines solos*, except the men only; while Beza’s rendering corresponds better with that of our common version: *Sed ipsis est dictum ne læderent gramen terræ, &c.; sed tantum homines qui non haberent signum Dei in frontibus suis*,—that they should not injure the grass of the earth, &c., but only the men which had not the sign of God in their foreheads. The difference is not material, so long as we consider the term *men* to be figurative as well as the terms grass, green things, trees, &c.; and it seems unreasonable to suppose, that in the same divinely inspired composition, vegetables, birds, beasts, serpents, monsters, and even women, are uniformly figures, while the term men and its equivalents are to be literally interpreted.

‘Five months.’—This power to torture or to try was to continue five months, a term supposed by some to signify a chronological period in the history of Christendom, equal to one hundred and fifty years; corresponding, it is said, with the incursion of the Saracens under Mahomet. Perhaps there would be no difficulty in finding other periods of literal torment, or of similar incursions, of an equal duration, either in political or ecclesiastical history. This, however, may not be necessary; the term may be only a mystic term—a key of correspondence with some other figure or scriptural type—as this period of five months’ trial by the locust power corresponds with the five months during which the waters “prevailed upon the earth,” (Gen. vii. 24,) as also with the time during which the waters were retiring from the face of the earth. If, however, these five months designate, literally, a period of time in the history of the world, we may presume it is not to be understood till the final development of truth takes place. It is not for us to know the times and the seasons, (Acts i. 7.)

The periods of time mentioned in the Apocalypse have not like those of the prophet Daniel an epoch assigned them, a *from* and *after*, from which we may date their commencement; and the termination of a duration, of which the commencement may be assigned *ad libitum* to meet one event or another, can afford no proof by which to verify the fulfilment of a prediction. Besides, the expiration of Daniel’s periods affords proofs, calculated as they may be from their *dates*, of the identity of the coming of Christ in the flesh, with the advent of him who, as the Jews well understood, “was to come.” But there cannot be the same proof required of the second coming of the Saviour, for, from all that is said of that event, it is plain that whenever it takes place there can be no misjudging respecting it: “As the lightning that cometh out of the one part under heaven, and shineth unto the other part, so will the coming of the Son of man be.” Until this is in some sense apparent, we may be confident that the time has not arrived; the assurance being repeatedly given in the Scriptures that the day of the Lord, whenever it does come, will come as a thief in the night,—suddenly and unexpectedly. There seems to be a degree of presumption in assuming dates and calculating periods, to defeat if possible this declared purpose of the Almighty; we incline therefore to the opinion that these five months are not a portion of the history of the world, but that they have some other signification, in respect to which we must for the present suspend our opinions.

§ 211. ‘And their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.’—It is said of the scorpion that it fixes itself violently with its mouth and with its feet upon those whom it wounds, so that it cannot be plucked off without great difficulty. The figure in this respect may represent the almost fatal adhesion of certain deductions from legal princi-

ples to human pretensions of merit ; trying their validity, and, if not utterly destroying them, showing at least their corrupt tendency—their inability to stand in the fiery trial, alluded to 1 Peter i. 7, and 1 Cor. iii. 13, destined *to try every man's work*.

“ I beheld,” said Jesus to his disciples, “ Satan (the accuser) as lighting fall from heaven. Behold, I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy : and nothing shall by any means *hurt* you,” (Luke x. 18, 19,) οὐδὲν ὑμῶς οὐ μὴ ἀδικήσει. To see Satan fall from heaven is equivalent to seeing the triumph of the economy of grace over the legal dispensation ; and the power of the apostles to tread on serpents and scorpions unharmed, may be taken as a figure of the power of the elements of the gospel (sealed ones) to overcome those principles of legal condemnation, arising from the transgression, which constitute the sting of death ;—that action of sin which must result in spiritual death. Corresponding with the same figure, the disciple adopted in Christ, by virtue of his imputed merits, triumphs over all the power of the enemy, having the same encouragement for his faith and confidence as that given to the prophet : “ And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions : be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks,” Ezek. ii. 6.

V. 6. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it : and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

Καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις ζητήσουσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι τὸν θάνατον, καὶ οὐ μὴ εὕρωσιν αὐτόν· καὶ ἐπιθυμήσουσιν ἀποθανεῖν, καὶ φεύξεται ὁ θάνατος ἀπ’ αὐτῶν.

§ 212. ‘ And in those days,’ &c.—This is a strong hyperbolical description of a state of mental distress incident to the plague of the scorpion sting, and indicating an extremity of trial. The action of this visitation is not final ; it appears rather preparative for something else. The scorpion-locust power was directed against but one class of objects ; even the members of this class were not to be destroyed, they were only to be tried ; a part of their trial or torture appears, however, to have consisted in a fearful looking for of something still more to be deprecated : “ Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and looking after those things which are coming on the earth,” (Luke xxi. 26.)

In a literal sense, those exposed to the fire and sword of the Saracen could hardly be said to have desired death without being able to find it ; and, in a spiritual sense, the state of condemnation figuratively spoken of as *death*, cannot be supposed to have been at any period desired or sought for. As to the desire of annihilation, it may be said to be and to have been always common with every convicted sinner without a better hope. It



may be “an after-thought—a wish unborn till virtue dies ;” but where sin is, virtue has died ; and hence the *after-thought*. This is not a peculiarity, however, to be confined to five months, or to one hundred and fifty years ; it has existed ever since our first parents strove to hide themselves amidst the trees of the garden.

The locusts from the smoke of the pit were not literally animals bearing that name, nor were they literally armed with the sting of other animals termed scorpions, nor were those stung or *hurt* by them literally animals termed *men* or human beings. This, we think, must be evident, if we suppose the figures of divine revelation to be consistent with each other ; and we can conceive of no other construction to be put upon the passage, than that these tortured beings are principles of self-righteousness, tried, as on the rack to the utmost, by elements of legal condemnation springing from the bottomless pit.

Vs. 7, 8. And the shapes of the locusts (were) like unto horses prepared unto battle ; and on their heads (were) as it were crowns like gold, and their faces (were) as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as (the teeth) of lions.

Καὶ τὰ ὁμοιώματα τῶν ἀκρίδων ὅμοια ἵπποις ἡτοιμασμένοις εἰς πόλεμον, καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτῶν ὡς στέφανοι ὅμοιοι χρυσῷ, καὶ τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτῶν ὡς πρόσωπα ἀνθρώπων, καὶ εἶχον τρίχας ὡς τρίχας γυναικῶν, καὶ οἱ ὀδόντες αὐτῶν ὡς λέοντων ἦσαν,

§ 213. ‘And the shapes,’ &c.—The general appearance, (*ὁμοίωμα*.) The locusts resembled war-horses in their state of preparation for battle. The allusion is probably to the ancient custom of covering the horse as well as the rider with armour. Horses, at the same time, as well as their armour, are human means of safety or of power to contend with an enemy ; and thus represent principles of self-righteousness, upon which some may expect to justify themselves or to contend with the requisitions of the law ; as it is said, “Some trust in chariots, and some in horses : but we will remember the name of the Lord our God,” Ps. xx. 7. So, also, they may represent principles or legal elements acting against the self-righteous by their tendency to enforce the requisitions of the law : “Those that take the sword shall perish by the sword,” (Matt. xxvi. 52 ;) so those who depend upon legal elements for their justification, must by the same elements meet their condemnation. We may say metaphorically of a polemic, with his array of arguments, that he appears as a war-horse equipped for battle ; and so we say spiritually of these *scorpio-locust* principles from the *abyss system* with their legal furniture armed for the contest.

‘On their heads were as it were crowns like gold ;’ *στέφανοι*—the kind of crown given to victors at the games. The crowns appeared like gold, and in a certain respect, perhaps, were justly entitled to this appearance.

The action of these locust-principles, we are to remember, is against other principles represented by *inhabitants of the earth, not having the seal*

*or mark of God in their foreheads.* They war against principles not belonging to God's plan of redemption, as set forth and testified to by the one hundred and forty-four thousand elements of the Old and New Testament revelations—the twelve multiplied by twelve, (§ 175.) Gold we suppose to represent truth, and a crown of gold to be the token of triumph in the cause of truth. These locust-principles appear crowned as victors in the cause of legal truth, although they are not the champions of gospel truth. The law is good when it is used lawfully; so these elements of the law, bringing the scorpion-sting to act upon the elements of self-righteousness, appear crowned as successful champions of truth. The elements of the bottomless pit system, represented by these locusts, are victorious in their contest with the elements of the earthly system; they would not be so, if they were contending with principles of the heavenly system of sovereign grace.

‘And their faces were as the faces of men.’—The human face we have already supposed (§ 128) to indicate wisdom, reason, &c. These faces of the locusts may be the characteristic of wisdom generally, or of human wisdom only. The law in its strictest sense bears the stamp of divine wisdom, and, lawfully applied, this wisdom is manifest in it. So the legal elements of the abyss system, crowned as they are with legal truth, and employed against the fallacious elements of self-justification, must bear the characteristic of divine wisdom. On the other hand, the same elements of legality, if employed to sustain a system of self-righteousness, would bear the stamp of *human* wisdom; for, strange as it may appear, man's wisdom favours most the elements of divine government least favourable to sinful humanity. Here, however, the locust-principles, operating against the inhabitants of the earth, representing elements of legal truth acting upon fallacious elements of a human system, must bear the stamp of divine wisdom, or of wisdom in the general sense of the term.

§ 214. ‘They had hair as the hair of women.’—The hair of women is given them for a covering or veil, (1 Cor. xi. 15,) symbolical of the covering of righteousness with which the disciple must be arrayed, or must be accounted to be arrayed, ere he can appear in the presence of his God. Such a covering of righteousness is at the same time a protection and a glory; woman, in this respect, is the image or symbol of the man. Her hair, it is said, was *given* for a covering: God gave it to her; and so the ascription or imputation of divine righteousness (the only true righteousness) to man, is the *gift* of God. The hair of the Nazarite was a similar figure. The disciple, though strong *in the Lord*, and in the power of his might, loses his strength when out of this position; because, out of this position, he is without the imputation of his Redeemer's righteousness, and is no longer capable of meeting the requisitions of the law. Long hair, except

in a Nazarite, is, as it is said 1 Cor. xi. 14, a shame to man; because man in this particular is an image or symbol of the Redeemer, bearing the same relation towards the woman that Christ bears towards his redeemed; for which reason also the disciple is to come *boldly* to the throne of grace—without hair, *uncovered*—trusting to his adoption in Him in whose name he comes. But if a man wear long hair, he places himself as a symbol in the position of a woman, or, figuratively speaking, he makes a woman of himself; an act of effeminacy to which there is in the mind of man an almost universal repugnance.

If the disciple, instead of coming boldly to the throne of grace, trusting in the name and merits of his Saviour, come in his own name, trusting in his own merits, he is as a man glorying in his own long hair—trusting in a righteousness of his own—in a covering emanating from his own strength. So Absalom gloried in his hair, which proved to be the instrument of his destruction.

As these locusts represent legal principles, so their hair or covering represents a legal righteousness, or that righteousness which the law requires. They exhibit this necessary covering as a standard under which they contend—a formidable equipment intimidating their adversaries. If these locusts contended on the side of the earthly system, we should consider their long hair a symbol of self-righteousness; but they contend against the earthly system of self-justification, and the hair of woman is a symbol of the legitimate and proper covering or veil—a legitimate and proper righteousness. Their exhibition of this hair, therefore, is a portion of their martial array, equivalent to their exhibition of the legal position—the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

‘And their teeth were as the teeth of lions.’—The lion we have assumed to be a figure of the element of justice, (§ 126.) The teeth of the lion may be said to be the power of justice, capable of destroying the criminal—the sinner; as, in the divine denunciation against a rebellious people, it is said, Deut. xxxii. 24, “They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction. I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust.”

As these legal elements of the pit thus showed the righteousness required by the law, so they exhibited the power and right of divine justice to exact the life of the sinner, to destroy where this righteousness is wanting; as it is said, Joel i. 6, “For a nation is come up upon my land, strong and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a young lion.” So the Psalmist, in allusion to the same action of legal elements exclaims, “Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth; break out the great teeth of the young lions;” and Ps. cxxiv. 6, “Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their *teeth*. Our soul is escaped



as a bird out of the snare of the fowler: the snare is broken, and we are escaped.” All these passages confirm the supposition that the teeth of lions, such as possessed by these locust-principles, represent elements of divine justice, adverse indeed to the salvation of the sinner, but still more adverse to every pretension of that sinner to self-justification. In this contest the teeth of the lion remain unbroken: they are broken only by the power of sovereign grace—by that exercise of mercy which finds a ransom for the victim of justice.

Vs. 9, 10. And they had breast-plates, as it were breast-plates of iron; and the sound of their wings (was) as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power (was) to hurt men five months.

καὶ εἶχον θώρακας ὡς θώρακας σιδηροῦς, καὶ ἡ φωνὴ τῶν περὺγων αὐτῶν ὡς φωνὴ ἁρμάτων ἵππων πολλῶν τρεχόντων εἰς πόλεμον. Καὶ ἔχουσιν οὐράς ὁμοίας σκορπίοις, καὶ κέντρα ἦν ἐν ταῖς οὐραῖς αὐτῶν, καὶ ἡ ἐξουσία αὐτῶν ἀδικῆσαι τοὺς ἄνθρωπους μῆνας πέντε.

§ 215. ‘And they had breast-plates.’—*Θώραξ*, armour for the body, covering the breast and back, (Rob. Lex. 309.) Old English, *habergeon*, a coat of mail, (Webster,) a complete covering for the trunk of the body—a cuirass.

‘As it were breast-plates of iron.’—Iron is a metal proverbially distinguished in Scripture, as well as in common parlance, for its strength; it is however an earthy material. The breast-plate of the locust is not the breast-plate of imputed divine righteousness, (Eph. vi. 14.) It is a legal breast-plate—the righteousness required by the law from all who are under the law. The legal principle in its contest with the elements of self-justification has its strength in the rigid exactions of law; as if the accuser himself appealed to this principle of divine justice to urge the condemnation of all those depending upon their own merits—the habiters of the earth.

‘And the sound of their wings,’ &c.—The sound of the onset of a multitude of chariots and horses must be an alarming sound, calculated to strike the opposing ranks with panic and fear. Terrific sounds are one of the characteristics of legal denunciation; as, in the giving of the law from Sinai, there were voices and sounds, as well as thunderings and lightnings. Thus we may say the charge of these locust-principles upon the elements of the earthly systems possesses the peculiar characteristic of the terrors of the law.

‘And they had tails like unto scorpions.’—The prophet that speaketh lies is said to be the tail, Is. ix. 15, and the devil (the accuser) is declared to be a liar, and the father of lies, John viii. 44. A prophet, as we have noticed, is an interpreter of the divine will or purpose—a prophet or interpreter of revelation, representing the purpose of God as a system of condemnation, acts the part of the accuser; while he is at the same time the father of a lie in respect to this misinterpretation of the economy of

grace, to which he attributes a sting of death belonging only to the legal dispensation. In allusion to this peculiarity, perhaps, it is represented that these locust-principles from the bottomless pit system, not only have the sting of the scorpion, but also that the tail is the seat of the poison, the instrument by which the sting of death (sin) is brought into action.

‘And stings were in their tails,’—or, *the stings were in their tails.*—There is no article in the original, but it may be supplied with propriety; as the sting spoken of is no doubt the *scorpion power* said to be given to these locusts in the third verse, and their instrument of torment or torture, spoken of in the fifth verse, already noticed, (§ 209.)

‘And their power was to hurt (*ἀδικῆσαι*) men five months.’—The hurt being the same as that supposed to be the opposite of justification. The whole equipment of these locust-principles exhibits them as legal elements arrayed with all the power of the law, except that they do not enforce condemnation. They are strong in the law, and exhibit the terrors of the law, but they do not exhibit the requisitions of the law as carried out to the *death*. The scorpion power may be said to be that of the law carried out to an extreme of refinement, corresponding with doctrinal views rendering the requisitions of the Gospel even more severe and more grievous to be borne than those of the Levitical dispensations; views exhibiting the spirit expressed in the threatening of the ill-advised king of Judea, 1 Kings xii. 11: “My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastened you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions;”—and this too as the construction of the language of him who invited all labouring under this bondage to come unto him, with the assurance that his yoke is easy and his burden light, (Matt. xi. 30.)

‘To hurt men five months.’—We can only at present compare this period of time with that of the prevailing or increasing of the waters of the deluge, by which the elements of the material earth were tried—indicating a trial of a character somewhat analogous; the earth representing a system, of which its men or inhabitants are the principles, to which principles the legal elements, styled the scorpions of the earth, are peculiarly hostile, although both are peculiar to the same system, (§ 210.)

V. 11. And they had a king over them, (which is) the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue (is) Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath (his) name Apollyon.

ἔχουσιν ἐφ’ αὐτῶν βασιλεία τὸν ἄγγελον τῆς ἄβύσσου, ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰβριστὶ Ἀβaddon, καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἑλληνικῇ ὄνομα ἔχει Ἀπολλύων.

§ 216. ‘And they had a king,’ &c.—It is said of the destructive species of locusts, Prov. xxx. 27, that “they have no king,” although they have the wisdom to go forth in bands. In allusion to this, it may be stated of these spiritual locusts, as something the more remarkable, that they have a king or

leader. The word rendered king signifies a chief of almost any kind. We suppose the king here to be a chief or leading principle, the ministering spirit, a controlling tendency of the *bottomless* system. The name Apollyon signifying, as generally admitted, the *destroyer*, from the verb ἀπόλλυμι, to destroy. The action of these locusts, as that of this first wo itself, is against the *unsealed* inhabitants of the earth, or the elements of the earthly or self-righteous system. The destruction in view is, consequently, that of these self-righteous elements; as the elements of the law, when brought to bear upon the pretensions of man to a merit of his own, must exhibit the folly of these pretensions, and thus destroy them. Apollyon is the destroyer, not of gospel principles, for these bear the *seal* in their foreheads, and are protected from his power, but he destroys those elements of justification by works upon which man would depend if there were no economy of grace. This ruling spirit of the bottomless pit is thus in effect the destroyer of those out of Christ, but not of those in Christ: in this respect, the action of Apollyon very nearly corresponds with that of Satan the accuser, and justifies the general supposition of the identity of the two characters. The province of Apollyon, however, may be limited to the destruction of the hopes of sinners derived from any merits of their own, while the power of Satan, the devil, the accuser, is excited to destroy the hopes of the sinner, whatsoever may be their foundation: the work of the Redeemer, as we shall hereafter find, consisting in a contest between the power of propitiation and the power of legal accusation—between the power of sovereign grace, and the unmitigated claims of justice.

#### RETROSPECT.

V. 12. One wo is past; (and) behold, Ἡ οὐαὶ ἡ μία ἀπῆλθεν· ἰδού, ἔρχονται ἔτι there come two woes more hereafter. δύο οὐαὶ μετὰ ταῦτα.

§ 217. 'One wo is past.'—That is, the exhibition of the character of one wo is finished. We are not obliged to consider these woes as literally successive events; nor is the final result of this first wo fully detailed. We are told only that men, in consequence apparently of the torture to which they were subjected, desired death without being able to obtain it. The name of the leader of this band of tormentors was the *destroyer*, and we may presume that he acted as a destroyer; and if we suppose the five months to be put for something else than a chronological period, we may say perhaps the same principles still hurt and still destroy not men literally, but doctrinal elements, figuratively spoken of as *men*.

In what then does this *wo* consist? Our thoughts on this subject must be taken merely as suggestions, for we are decided only in believing these locusts to represent something else than Saracen or Mahometan troops.



We have supposed the design of opening the bottomless pit to be, that of developing the true character of its elements. The question still presents itself, how such a development can be a *wo* to the inhabitants of the earth? what connection is there between the earth and the bottomless pit?

When the fifth angel sounded, a star was seen to fall from heaven to the earth, to which the key of the bottomless pit was given. The bottomless pit must be therefore something belonging to the earth; else why should the messenger employed to open it be sent to the earth? This pit must be a pit in the earth;—the figure corresponding with the ancient notion of the earth as a large, square, flat surface, of a certain undefined thickness, but of such a character, that a pit or shaft passing entirely through this stratum of earth would finally reach an abyss where there was nothing more of matter to be met with, or nothing capable of furnishing a bottom. But as the shaft of a well requires earth around it to make it a shaft, so this pit could not be a pit without the existence of the earth in which it is supposed to be located.

Analogous with this, we suppose the bottomless pit system to be a part of what we call the earthly system, the first being an important feature in the character of the last: the principles of the earthly system depending for their supposed correctness upon the nature of the pit system. For which reason, to exhibit the real incorrectness of this earthly system, the true character of the elements of the pit system must be developed.

We have seen (§ 206) that the word rendered pit in English, and *τὸ γγέαια* in the Greek, is in the Hebrew as well as in the Septuagint applied to what we call a *well*, whether it be full or dry—a well or pit of living water, or a dry well. By way of illustration, we may suppose a person about to take up his residence in a tract of country where he must depend upon a single *well* for his supply of water—the whole character of this tract of country we may say is involved in that of this well. If it be a never-failing spring of wholesome water, the location is a good one, it will afford the means of existence or support; but if the well prove to be a dry pit having no water, or if the water be unwholesome and destructive to life, the whole tract of country is worthless. Under such circumstances the new settler's first object will be to have this well or pit opened, that he may know what the character of its contents is before he hazards his future happiness by a dependence upon it.

What we call the earthly system, corresponds with the tract of country we have imagined. In the midst, and as a part of this earthly system, is a provision for eternal life, the distinguishing feature of the system, and that upon which its whole value depends. If the principles of this provision be sound and well-founded, all is well; but if they be incorrect and entirely without foundation, and even of a character hostile to every hope of salvation, then the whole system involving this provision, and depending upon

it, must be equally worthless, its elements being entirely incapable of being sustained.

We find in the history of the patriarchs a well of pure water to be considered an essential of life. As such, we consider a *well* symbolic of whatever is essential to eternal life, comprehending all that is requisite to justify men in the sight of God. Wells are not spoken of, however, as means of ablution; we therefore do not suppose them to represent the element of propitiation or atonement, but rather what was supposed under the old dispensation to be the essential of eternal life, that is, fulfilment of the law. So the wells of the patriarchs were deserving of little confidence, for they held good but for a short time, and were frequently found to be dry.

Accordingly, we suppose the bottomless pit system to represent a self-righteous scheme for the inheritance of eternal life, which precludes the idea of propitiation; something anterior to the supposition of man's need of an atonement. It is a pit without water, as well as a pit without a bottom. It is a plan of self-justification by works of the law, the elements of which, when fully analyzed and exhibited, show the subjection of man to the law; and thus bringing the elements of the law to act upon the principles of self-justification, exhibit the sting of death, and operate on the mind a conviction of sin, preparatory to further views of man's insufficiency and of God's gracious purpose.

The true character of the elements of the *abyss* system is thus exhibited; and such an exhibition is a *wo* to the inhabitants of the earth, because this development is the first step towards the destruction of the elements of the earthly system generally. Man being thus convinced of sin, the next step, as we shall see, will be to expose the folly, on the part of man, of any attempt to atone for this sin by a propitiation of his own working out; still less can he depend upon any atonement wrought out by a fallen man in his behalf: "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him," (Ps. xlix. 7.) But this we suppose to be the subject of the next *wo*.\*

\* The first *wo* occupies but eleven verses of the ninth chapter; whereas ten verses of the ninth chapter, the whole of the tenth chapter, and thirteen verses of the eleventh chapter, in all thirty-four verses, are taken up with the relation of the *second wo*; and the *third wo* appears to extend from the fifteenth verse of the eleventh chapter to the conclusion of the Apocalypse, or at least as far as the end of the twentieth chapter,—the remaining two chapters being occupied principally with the description of a scene of triumph and blessedness, the converse or opposite of the scenes represented under the three woes.

We see nothing in this first *wo* which may not take place in the mind of every disciple, as an exhibition of the true character of certain doctrines: a process in the development of truth entirely distinct from matters of political and ecclesiastical history.

Under the first wo the earthly supply of sustenance is not cut off: men are tormented or tortured by the sting of the scorpion-locusts, but they still depend upon the productions of the earth, the grass, green things, and trees, for the means of life, and perhaps for remedies under their sufferings. So the self-righteous man, even under the conviction of sin, may still depend upon some system of works to furnish the means of eternal life; and analogous with this, the elements of an earthly system may continue to be set off as the means of eternal life, against the principles of legal condemnation exhibited under the character of these venomous locusts.



## CHAPTER IX.—(Continued.)

## SECOND WO.—THE EUPHRATEAN CAVALRY.

Vs. 13, 14. And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

Καὶ ὁ ἕκτος ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισε, καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν μίαν ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων κεράτων τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου τοῦ χρυσοῦ τοῦ ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ, λέγουσαν τῷ ἕκτῳ ἄγγέλῳ, ὁ ἔχων τὴν σάλπιγγα· λύσον τοὺς τέσσαρας ἄγγέλους τοὺς δεδεμένους ἐπὶ τῷ ποταμῷ τῷ μεγάλῳ Εὐφράτῃ.

§ 218. ‘A voice from the four horns,’ &c.—We have already supposed the altar to represent the *Logos*, or sovereign purpose of God, (§ 161;) its material, gold, being indicative of the truth of the doctrine or principle of divine sovereignty involved in this purpose. The four horns may represent the same elements of power as those exhibited under the figure of the four living creatures, in the midst of and round about the throne, (Rev. iv. 6, §§ 126, 7, 8; )—Horns also representing powers, (§ 137,) as the horn of an animal constitutes its weapon, or power of defence or attack. The horns of the altar, accordingly, represent the principles of divine government upon which, or by the aid of which, the plan of redemption is carried into effect. The horns of the altar were made use of for securing the sacrifice to, or upon, the altar, Ps. cxviii. 27: “Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.” The great sacrifice ever in contemplation with the Most High, is the propitiation of Christ. Apparently, these four horns are so many important principles connecting this sacrifice for sin with the sovereign purpose of God.

The altar of burnt-offering was to have horns upon the four corners, Ex. xxvii. 2, and xxx. 10. Aaron was to offer the yearly sacrifice on the horns of the altar of incense. The horns are not put for the atonement itself, but for something exhibiting the vicarious offering of Christ, as necessarily involved in the purpose of Sovereign Grace. So our trust in the atonement of Christ, as effectual in the salvation of sinners is confirmed by the belief that the sovereignty, the purity, the justice, the mercy of God, all co-operate in showing the intimate connection of such a propitiation with the purpose of grace. As the altar sanctifies the gift, and not the gift the

altar, so the divine purpose sets apart the atonement of Christ ; it is not the atonement which sets apart the purpose.

God's *sovereignty* gives him the right to require and to accept any propitiation he pleases. His *purity* involves the infinite distance between his perfection and the imperfection of man, showing the corresponding infinite degree of propitiation required. His *justice* exhibits the necessity of some adequate means, by which its claims may be satisfied ; and his *mercy* affords the assurance that the adequate propitiation required will be provided. The attribute of wisdom being involved in that of mercy or goodness, the counsels of wisdom are those of goodness or loving-kindness, as we find from the general tenor of Scripture, especially from the book of Proverbs.

We lay hold of one of the horns of this altar when, with deep conviction of our sinfulness, we humble ourselves before God ; acknowledging his sovereignty, and relying for pardon upon his grace, through the great Sacrifice offered in our behalf. We lay hold upon another of these horns when, convinced of our sins, we feel ourselves deserving of the punishment his justice requires, having no hope but in the same vicarious sacrifice. So, when we contemplate the infinite distance there is between the perfection of the Deity and our unworthiness, and thence infer our need of redeeming mercy, we lay hold of another of these horns ; and this, if possible, still more when we look to his goodness and loving-kindness, and trust in his promises of salvation.

§ 219. 'Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet,' &c.—The sixth messenger or instrument of revelation, is called upon by the four elements just enumerated to loose certain other messengers previously restrained or bound. The whole process refers to a development of truth ; the loosing of these angels being a figure of the same kind as that of the opening of the bottomless pit.

'Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.'—This river, like the bottomless pit, we take to be the figure of a system. The four messengers (angels) bound in it must be four elements, which as soon as loosed become instruments of revealing the true character of this system, and that of its principles.

The Euphrates bounded the land of Canaan on the east, but was not a portion of the promised territory. It was rather a heathen river. It ran through the city of Babylon, being a means of purification and sustenance, upon which the inhabitants of that city depended ; although eventually it became the instrument of delivering the city into the hands of a foreign power. Its figurative use in Scripture seems to be that of an opposite of the river alluded to by David, "the stream whereof shall make glad the city of our God," Ps. xlvii. 4 ; as it is also probably an opposite of the river

of the water of life, described Rev. xxii. 1, as proceeding from the throne of the Most High.

The term *great* may be applied to the Euphrates here, to direct the mind to that which is represented by the river; the spiritual river being the great river as distinguished from the literal; or it may be a sarcastic allusion to human apprehensions of the river—that which man esteems *great*. “Is not this,” said the vain-glorious monarch, “*great* Babylon, which I have built.”

As we suppose the river of the water of life to be the real means of purification from sin, so we may take the Euphrates to be a figure of some human system, or pretended means of propitiation—means really calculated to prove the ruin of those depending upon them—the river bearing a relation to the city of Babylon afterwards spoken of, (Rev. xiv. 8,) similar to that borne by the bottomless pit to the earth, (§ 217;) the Euphrates being a source of purification and sustenance depended upon by the inhabitants of the earth. The approaching exhibition of the false and destructive character of this source is a *wo*, or the commencement of a *wo*, to the elements of the earthly system spoken of as the men or inhabitants of the earth.

Vs. 15, 16. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen (were) two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

Καὶ ἐλύθησαν οἱ τέσσαρες ἄγγελοι οἱ ἡτοιμασμένοι εἰς τὴν ὥραν καὶ ἡμέραν καὶ μῆνα καὶ ἐνιαυτόν, ἵνα ἀποκτείνωσι τὸ τρίτον τῶν ἀνθρώπων. Καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν στρατευμάτων τοῦ ἱππικοῦ, δύο μυριάδες μυριάδων· ἤκουσα τὸν ἀριθμὸν αὐτῶν.

§ 220. ‘And the four angels were loosed.’—This call from the horns of the altar is a fiat of the Almighty; the requisition of his attributes being as imperative as his command: and God said, Let there be light, and there was light. He spake, and it was done. The voice said, Loose the four angels, and the four angels were loosed.

‘Which were prepared for an hour,’ &c.—or, more strictly, according to the Greek, which were prepared *unto the* hour, day, month, and year; the enumeration of these portions of time giving intensity to the expression designed to show that this particular revelation is kept back until the proper moment for it, and the use of the definite article before the word *hour* marking such an appointed time.\* The indefinite article *an*, of our common version, does not appear warranted by the text of any edition of the Greek. As the four angels holding the four winds of the earth were pre-

\* This also appears to be the common use of the Greek preposition *εἰς*, with an accusative, (Rob. Lex. 191,) as 2 Tim. i. 12, *εἰς ἐκείτην τὴν ἡμέραν*. See also the use of the same preposition, Jude 6, even without the article: *εἰς καὶ τὴν μέλλουσαν κρίσιν*.



vented from *hurting* any earthly element till the one hundred and forty-four thousand were sealed ; and as the locusts were not permitted to kill, but only to *hurt*, during the reign of terror allotted them ; so these four angels have been kept back from making their revelation till the precise moment for bringing it forth. This moment, however, may not be literally an epoch in the history of the world : it may be designed to point out a certain stage of development ; the exposure of a certain error being necessary, before its opposite truth can be fully exhibited.\*

\* To slay the third of men ;' that is, men in the *third*, or spiritual sense, (§ 191.)—We presume these *men* to be the inhabitants of the earth against whom the three *woes* are pronounced, (Rev. viii. 13.)—unsealed principles or elements of the earthly system, not intended to be preserved. The word translated *slay* signifies simply to kill, as distinguished from slaughtering a victim for sacrifice. To kill is to destroy—to deprive of life—perhaps, in matters of doctrine, to show the elements of a system to be altogether literal, without the spirit or essential of life. The issuing of the four angels with their forces being equivalent to a revelation, the tendency of the revelation is to destroy especially certain erroneous principles, manifesting them to be without life, or without the principle of life. The elements of the pit system were not permitted to destroy ; they were only to torture—to elicit truth ; but the elements of the *Great River* go further—they are permitted to kill ; the verb translated in the fifth verse to *kill*, being the same as that in the fifteenth verse rendered to *slay*—as if to direct us to compare the prohibition in the one case with the express design in the other.

\* And the number of the army of the horsemen (were) two hundred thousand thousand,'—Gr. *two myriads of myriads*—or twice ten thousand times ten thousand, equal to two hundred millions : a number very far beyond that of any literally invading forces ever yet known, horse and foot included ; and perhaps equal, at the time of the prophecy, to one third or one quarter of the whole population of the globe. We suppose this number to represent something infinite or countless. There may besides be a further meaning in the duplex sign, *two*. Calculating one horseman to every six individuals of a family, one hundred millions of horsemen would require a population of six hundred millions of men, women, and children, to permit them to be drafted. This number alone therefore appears sufficiently countless ; why then should it be doubled ? Why should the sign of an infinite number be represented

\* This hour, day, month, and year, has been computed as three hundred and ninety-one years and fifteen days, a period said to correspond with the progress of the Turks from the time of the Crusades, A. D. 1251, to their taking of Carmania from the Poles, 1672. (Bagster's C. B.) But we leave the benefit of this calculation to those who take a different view of the design of the Apocalypse from that here proposed.

*twofold*? And why should the emphatic declaration be added—"I heard the number of them?" There seems to be also a correspondence between the number of twice ten thousand times ten thousand, and the number of the angels round about the throne, Rev. v. 11, "ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands." We suppose these horsemen to represent doctrinal powers or elements of a system, figuratively styled the great Euphrates: these elements being designed to act upon those of the earthly system spoken of as the *third of men*. The twofold character of the number of these destroying elements we may suppose to represent the twofold action of both the letter and the spirit. That is, whatever this Euphratean system may represent, its elements, both in a literal and spiritual sense, tend to show the fallacy of the principles of the earthly system. So we suppose the cloven tongues of the Holy Spirit to represent the twofold action of the literal and spiritual meaning of the language of inspiration.

There can be no doubt but that the two hundred millions of horsemen represent the same power as that figured by the four angels; the sudden change of this number *four* into such a multitude, being somewhat similar to that met with in the account of the evil spirits, Mark v. 9, first spoken in the singular number, and immediately afterwards represented as a legion, several thousands, or a multitude. The term *λεγεών*, indeed, is supposed by some to be the name of a prince or commander of a multitude, (Rob. Lex. 406.) So these four angels may represent four chiefs of the two hundred millions of horsemen. The difference as a figure is not material; it is only the difference between speaking of a certain assailing power as the leader of a band, or as a band with its leader. We may suppose the quadruple figure of the four angels to represent *all* the leading features of a system; as the four corners of the earth are put for all the earth, (§ 172.)

V. 17. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breast-plates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses (were) as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone.

Καὶ οὕτως εἶδον τοὺς ἵππους ἐν τῇ ὁράσει, καὶ τοὺς καθήμενους ἐπ' αὐτῶν, ἔχοντας θώρακας πυρίνους καὶ ἵακινθίνους καὶ θειώδεις, καὶ αἱ κεφαλαὶ τῶν ἵππων ὡς κεφαλαὶ λεόντων, καὶ ἐκ τῶν στομάτων αὐτῶν ἐκπορεύεται πῦρ καὶ καπνὸς καὶ θείον.

§ 221. 'And thus I saw,' &c.—We have supposed the Apocalypse to be a revelation, through the instrumentality of a vision or waking dream; but here we have a specific application of the term to it: "I saw in the vision," ἐν τῇ ὁράσει. The same term occurs only in one other passage of the New Testament, Acts ii. 17, "your young men shall see visions." In the Septuagint it is of frequent occurrence. The predictions of the prophets are called *visions*—"prophetarum predictiones vocantur ὁράσεις," Lex. Suiceri. The Hebrew word rendered in our common version *burden*, is expressed by this term in the Greek, Is. xix. 1, ὁράσεις αἰγύπτου, and xxx. 6, the bur-

den or vision of the beasts of the south, (Concord. Tromii.) It is applied, Zech. x. 2, to the false dreams or visions of soothsayers and divines, οἱ μύρταις ὁράσεις πειθεῖς—"the diviners have seen a lie," or false vision. The term may have been first applied amongst the Greeks to pictures supposed to be presented to the minds of those who professed to interpret the will of the gods, and whose pretensions to visions probably took their rise from a traditionary knowledge of the mode in which the Hebrew prophets were instructed. The apostle John no doubt used the word as it was commonly understood in his time, viz., as a waking dream: the mental vision of one whose thoughts are entirely abstracted from earthly objects, and in this situation contemplates a symbolic exhibition, to be interpreted by its own rules.

'The horses in the vision, and them that sat on them.'—These were war-horses, and their riders warriors, representing doctrinal powers engaging in what we may call a contest of principles. The white horse and his rider, (Rev. vi. 2,) we have supposed to represent the redeeming power, going forth to overcome the legal elements opposed to the salvation of the sinner; the great champion not only going forth himself, but controlling the action of subordinate powers, to carry his purpose into effect. As, in a literal sense, the wars between nations are subordinate to the purposes of God for carrying out his designs, so the war between the elements of the Euphratean system, and the elements of the earthly system, is something subordinate to the action of the Rider of the white horse. If the two hundred millions of horsemen be not conducted by this champion, their action is something under his control. They are employed to destroy certain erroneous principles, in order to prepare the way for his coming, and his final victory. As in the invasion of a country by a foreign power, one portion of the inhabitants may contend with another portion, and thus facilitate the conquest on the part of the invader; so, preparatory to the victory of Gideon, in the host of the Philistines every man's sword was set against his fellow, Judges vii. 22.

As the bottomless pit was a portion of the earth, so the Euphrates is also an earthly river; and as the blinded inhabitants of the earth may have taken their pestiferous abyss for a well of living water, so, with the same blindness, they may have depended upon this *great earthly river* as a river of the water of life. The true character of the elements of this great Euphrates is now developed, and the inhabitants of the earth proved to be destroyed by the very power to which they trusted. This delusive system of atonement being unfolded, an infinite number of legal principles are seen to proceed from it. These principles, like those who seek to justify themselves, resembling the *war-horse* in his eagerness for the conflict, heedless of the consequences: as it is said, Jeremiah viii. 6, "No man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? Every one turned to his



course, as the *horse rusheth into the battle.*" At the same time these principles are just those upon which it is to be shown that sinful man can have no power to provide a propitiation for himself. If he perform all required of him by the law, he does no more than his duty ; consequently, if he come short in the performance of a single requisition, he can subsequently do nothing more than his duty to atone for that single transgression. On legal or judicial principles, a whole eternity of obedience cannot atone for a single hour of rebellion. The angels that excel in strength, that do the commandments of God, hearkening unto the voice of his word, (Ps. ciii. 20,) can do no more than their duty. They cannot, therefore, atone for the shortcoming of others ; and the same may be said of every created being—yea, the heavens are unclean in the sight of the Most High ! How much more abominable and filthy is man, who drinketh in iniquity like water ! Such is the axiom of the divine law ; and such the action of every principle emanating from it. A system of atonement therefore involving these principles, must have in effect the operation of overthrowing every earthly element of self-justification.

§ 222. 'Having breast-plates of fire, of *hyacinth*, and brimstone.'—These warriors were arrayed in armour of very extraordinary materials, and this not merely in appearance. Such was the real character of these breast-plates. The *hyacinth* is said to be a gem of a yellowish-red colour ; but is described by Pliny (Rob. Lex. 773) as of a dark cerulean colour, probably the bluish tinge peculiar to the flame of burning sulphur ; the *hyacinth* of these breast-plates being a compound of the two other materials, fire and brimstone ; the composition of the armour for protection, corresponding with the materials of what is afterwards described as the weapon of offence, or means of destruction. The cuirass, or coat of mail of heavy cavalry, is not simply a means of defence ; such troops being principally employed to bear down and break the enemies' line by the weight of their charge, which they are enabled to do as much by their armour as by the use of sword and spear. So the shield or buckler of the ancients was sometimes employed as an instrument of attack, as well as of defence, being armed with sharp spikes, or pointed bosses ; as, to rush on the thick bosses of JEHOVAH'S buckler, Job xv. 26, is expressive not merely of a vain and fruitless attack, but of the madness of determined self-destruction. The *hyacinth* or *jacinth* gem is an impenetrable substance, and therefore an appropriate figure for a material of the breast-plate ; the gem being supposed to combine the qualities of the fire and sulphur with its own solidity. In the description of the means of offence, we find *smoke* substituted for *jacinth* ; this smoke also combining the same qualities. But a breast-plate of fire and smoke and sulphur would be a figure hardly admissible.

We suppose *fire* to represent the trying power of the revealed word,

and *brimstone* the perpetuity of the action of this fire. The employment of these breast-plates, therefore, is something equivalent to the perpetual action of the revealed word, in opposing the erroneous influence of the elements of the earthly system.

‘And the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions.’—The defensive armour only of the rider is mentioned; the means of offence or attack are ascribed to the horse. These had the heads of lions. They possess the characteristic quality of lions; as animals with a human face are supposed to possess the characteristic of man—reason. The lion we have considered as representing the attribute of justice, (§ 126.) These horses are therefore elements or powers of justice; powers by which the opposing elements of a self-righteous or earthly system are destroyed. The locusts had teeth as of lions, but as they were not permitted to kill, their teeth could only intimidate or torture. These horses with the judicial characteristic of the lion, had also the lion’s power to destroy or to kill: the lion’s head possessing the lion’s mouth.

‘And out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone.’—That is, out of the mouths of the horses, whose heads had just been described. The horse and the rider, however, may be taken as one figure of the power and action of a principle of doctrine. The fire, smoke, and brimstone, correspond in all but the middle term with the composition of the breast-plates; smoke also combining the qualities of the fire and sulphur. The weapon of attack, therefore, whether proceeding from the mouth of the horse or of the rider, may be said to be of the same composition as that of the breast-plates. The offensive and defensive arms are alike composed of these elements of trial, of perpetuity, and of the two combined. The armour of the locusts was as of iron—passively defensive only. The armour of the horsemen is of fire, and jacinth, and brimstone, actively defensive; as the arrow, falling upon a breast-plate of iron, may be unable to penetrate it, but is uninjured by it; while an arrow falling upon a breast-plate of fire and sulphur, as well as of an impenetrable gem, may be supposed to be consumed and destroyed by these combustible materials with which it comes in contact.

Vs. 18. 19. By these three was the third (part) of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails (were) like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

Ἀπὸ τῶν τριῶν πληγῶν τούτων ἰσπεκτιάνθησαν τὸ τρίτον τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἐκ τοῦ πυρὸς καὶ τοῦ καπνοῦ καὶ τοῦ θείου ἐκπορευομένου ἐκ τῶν στομάτων αὐτῶν, ἡ γὰρ ἐξουσία τῶν ἵππων ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτῶν ἐστὶ καὶ ἐν ταῖς οὐραῖς αὐτῶν· αἱ γὰρ οὐραὶ αὐτῶν ὅμοιαι ὄφεσιν, ἔχουσαι κεφαλὰς, καὶ ἐν αὐταῖς ἠδικοῦσι.

§ 223. ‘By these three,’ or by these three plagues, ‘was the third of men killed.’—The third of men, corresponding with the view we have taken of

the terms *third* (§ 191) and *men*, or *inhabiters* of the earth, (§ 195,) are principles of the earthly system—doctrinal elements depending upon that system. The Euphratean cavalry constitutes the doctrinal power of the system represented by that great river. The weapon of offence of this cavalry, as well as its armour, is the unquenchable fire of revealed truth, or the deductions from that truth, as smoke is a result of the combustion of fire and sulphur. The source whence this portion of revealed truth emanates is the judicial attribute of the Supreme Being—the element of vindictive justice—the head and mouth of the lion; for if the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions, their *mouths* must have been as the mouths of lions. And this is just that object of dread which the convicted sinner, in view of the justice of God, must fearfully contemplate; and which, in being contemplated, must break down, champ, crush, and grind to powder every pretension to self-justification. “They gaped upon me,” says David, in allusion to such a state of conviction, “with their mouths, as a ravening and roaring lion. Save me,” he adds, “from the lion’s mouth,” Ps. xxii. 13, 21. The lion first described as in the midst and round about the throne, Rev. iv. 6, 7, is like a lion; and perhaps we may say, in any plan of redemption, the first attribute of the Deity to be satisfied is justice. It is then the emanation of truth from this attribute of justice, which destroys the pretensions of human merit spoken of as the *third of men*.

‘For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails.’—In their mouth, because, as we have seen, their mouth is the mouth of the lion; in their tails, for the reason subsequently given.

‘For their tails were like serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt,’—to hurt, being an opposite of justifying, (§ 174.) Their tails were like serpents, in their use and action. They had heads, that is, serpent-heads:—as a lion’s head implies a lion’s mouth, so a serpent’s head implies a serpent’s sting. The serpent is the accuser—the accuser’s sting is the transgression of the law: the action of the accuser is to bring the transgressor under the law. The false prophet, or false interpreter of the divine will, (the tail,) maintains the necessity of justification by the works of the law. Thus the principles of legality represented by these *tails* operate to *hurt* or counteract justification, and so expose its victim to the action of the sting of death, or sin,—the transgression of the law. Here, then, we perceive a double operation in this Euphratean-horse power. Principles emanating from the attribute of inflexible justice call for the death of the transgressor; while principles of subjection to the law, in opposition to the justification of the disciple, pronounce the sentence of condemnation upon every soul that doeth evil, though he offend only in one point.

§ 224. This view of the operation of these Euphratean principles may throw some light on the character of the system. As a river of the earth,



we have supposed this Euphrates to be the figure of a human scheme or proposed means of atonement. This scheme, we may suppose, admits the fact of man's sinfulness; but it proposes to atone for this sinfulness by works of propitiation of man's performance, so as to compensate for the past by subsequent obedience, or to make up for past transgression and neglect of duty on one hand, by some extraordinary acts of submission or certain scrupulous performances. Such is the system of human wisdom. Very specious in appearance, so long as its real elements are bound, or not developed; but as soon as they are fully exhibited, and the four angels are loosed, (four being put for all,) then the true character of its multifarious principles is manifested, and they are all found to be composed of two elements alike destructive to man's pretensions of justification by his own works. These two distinguishing elements may afford a reason, if that already given be deemed insufficient, (§ 220,) for the duplex denomination of the *centenary* number of the horsemen, showing that whatever may be their multitude or variety, these emanations from the great river scheme are all of the twofold character alluded to. The mouth of the lion, and the serpent's sting, is to be perceived in both.

The bottomless pit system, we suppose to be a system of self-righteousness—a resting upon one's own merits, unconvinced of sin—neither admitting nor contemplating the necessity of atonement; recognizing the existence and power of the law, but proposing to meet its requisitions by works. Here the remedy required is an exhibition of the exceeding sinfulness of sin; not resulting in actual condemnation, (death,) but showing the call for some propitiatory provision, to meet the case of delinquency. Accordingly, the secret nature of this mystery being laid open, it is manifested to afford no bottom or foundation upon which a hope or trust of justification by works of the law can be built; while the features of the system, in proportion as they are developed, exhibit their direct tendency *to hurt*, or bring about the condemnation of the disciple, or to leave him at least in an unjustified position.

The operation of the first *wo* we apprehend to be that of so exhibiting the folly of human pretensions to righteousness as to provide for the conviction of sin. The necessity of some propitiation being now admitted, the next error to be combated is the supposition of the sinner's ability to atone for himself. This error is exposed by showing what must be the true character of the elements of an atoning provision (a river) of this kind; how its principles directly counteract the claims of human merit to justification, and virtually cause the condemnation of those depending upon such a delusive scheme of redemption, instead of contributing in any degree to cleanse them from their guilt.

The exhibition of this latter folly is the subject of the second *wo*—a *wo*

to the inhabitants of the earth, (§ 205,) or to the elements of the earthly system, because these false pretensions are destroyed by the exhibition of the legal elements,\* represented by the overwhelming body of cavalry, brought into action in this second process of trial.

We do not pretend to apply either of these exhibitions to a particular denomination or portion of the visible church. It is for all denominations, and all individuals of that church, to employ the mirror themselves, and to contemplate in it the peculiar features of their respective systems, as far as they may find them represented.

Vs. 20, 21. And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

Καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, οἳ οὐκ ἀπεκρίναντο ἐν ταῖς πληγαῖς ταύταις, οὐτε μετενόησαν ἐκ τῶν ἔργων τῶν χειρῶν αὐτῶν, ἵνα μὴ προσκυνήσωσι τὰ δαιμόνια καὶ τὰ εἰδωλα τὰ χρυσᾶ καὶ τὰ ἀργυρᾶ καὶ τὰ χαλκᾶ καὶ τὰ λίθινα καὶ τὰ ξύλινα, ἃ οὐτε βλέπειν δύναται οὔτε ἀκοῦειν οὔτε περιπατεῖν, καὶ οὐ μετενόησαν ἐκ τῶν φόβων αὐτῶν οὔτε ἐκ τῶν φαρμακείων αὐτῶν οὔτε ἐκ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῶν οὔτε ἐκ τῶν κλεμμάτων αὐτῶν.

§ 225. 'And the rest of the men.'—It is difficult to say even what is *probably* to be understood by this *rest*, or remainder, or those left of the men. By these three it is said, in the 18th verse, was the third (part) of men killed, leaving us no room to suppose but that the whole of this third was destroyed; in which case there can be no remainder. On the other hand, the trees, the sea, the creatures in the sea, the ships, the rivers, the sun, the moon, the day, and even the night, (Rev. viii. 7–12,) all suffer in their *third*, and nothing is intimated with respect to their remaining two-thirds.

We suppose men, or inhabitants of the earth, to be figures of doctrinal

\* We apply this term *legal elements* to these horsemen with less hesitation, because the fire, smoke, and brimstone, of their equipment, correspond so nearly with the volcanic characteristics of Sinai, that we think there can be no mistake in this particular. We may add here that, in addition to the feature of *perpetuity* supposed to be indicated by sulphur or brimstone, the smoke and effluvia arising from its combustion have been long considered antidotes to the infection of contagious diseases—purifying and cleansing substances submitted to their action; the exhalation from burning sulphur being perhaps destructive to the life of the animalcula entering into the composition of pestilential virus. Thus, as fire is the purifier and trier of metals, the smoke of burning sulphur is the trier and purifier of other substances; while the sulphur itself, like the fuel of volcanic combustion, is that which gives perpetuity to both of these agents. The fire, and smoke, and sulphur, from the mouths of the horses, in their destruction of the one-third of men, thus represent the revealed word in its destruction of certain errors, combining three elements, two of which have the characteristic of trying and purifying, and one that of continual ceaseless operation.

principles of self-justification : deductions from revelation, capable of being made in three different senses, that is, by taking Scripture in the literal sense, in the metaphorical sense, and in the spiritual sense. In this last sense these elements of self-justification are destroyed by the development of the great river system ; but in the other two senses they still remain unchanged and unaffected :—as we may say that no argument drawn from the literal, or metaphorical sense of revelation, will destroy these elements or change their tendency. Something like this may be represented by the impenitent state of the *rest of the men*. The literal construction of this vision, for example, does not counteract the erroneous view usually formed of man's dependence upon his own works ; neither does the ordinary figurative application of the vision to matters of church history ; but the spiritual view of it, when fully attained, we think will have this effect. If it do not appear so from the manner in which we have exhibited these truths, the fault is in our feeble ability, and not in the nature of the case.

'Yet repented not,' &c.—The word *yet* is unnecessarily introduced here. Some editions of the Greek have *ὁὐ μετενοήσαν* in the twentieth verse, instead of *οὐκ ἔτε*. We should either read, the rest of the men repented not of the works of their hands, and repented not of their murders, &c., or neither repented of their works, nor of their murders, &c. This would give a finish to the sentence, which it seems to require ; for with these two verses the relation of this *wo*, so far as the four angels and the horsemen are concerned, ends :—the one-third of men are killed, and the other two-thirds remain unchanged ; the next chapter commencing with an entire new exhibition.

Whatever this *rest* or remainder of men may be, however, it is composed of those chargeable with idolatry, murder, sorcery, fornication, and theft. The idolatry, too, seems to be of the lowest kind,—the worship of demons and of dumb idols ; and the crimes those of the grossest character, such as *literally* but a small portion of mankind actually commit ; the reason and experience of man in every stage of society showing the necessity of punishing these crimes for the common welfare. We cannot but take it for granted, therefore, that something else than the ordinary literal meaning is here intended.

'That they should not worship,' &c.—Idolatry, in a spiritual sense, we have already (§ 61) shown to consist in the motive of action—an intention to serve and promote the glory of *self*, instead of serving and glorifying God ; and we suppose doctrinal principles favouring these motives to be here alluded to, under the figure of idolaters. Men worship idols made of earthly materials, and the work of their own hands, when they ascribe their salvation and eternal happiness to works of righteousness of their own per-



formance. They worship devils or demons, when their motive of action is a slavish fear of punishment, or a mercenary expectation of reward.

There may be a variety of grades in this species of idolatry, according as the individuals chargeable with it are more or less intellectual and intelligent. One man may give a penny to a charitable or religious object, and another may build a temple or endow an asylum. If the motive be to establish a claim of merit, or to compensate for a want of merit, the act of idolatry is the same. One man may count his beads, and another may make long prayers; one may fast once or twice a week, and another may be scrupulously abstemious throughout his life; one may observe days and months, and forms, and another may be as punctilious in certain outward acts of devotion, public and private; one may depend upon the repetition of a creed, or the maintenance of a single point of doctrine, and another may contend for the importance of a code of doctrine. In all, if the motive be to establish a merit, the performance is a mere act of idolatry. The idols may be of different materials, but they are still the works of men's hands; the works have really no more merit in themselves than an idol of wood or stone has ability to save. They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them. In this respect the self-righteous disciple of the most enlightened portion of the visible church of Christ may be as really an *idolater* as the ignorant pagan of antiquity, or the infatuated South-sea worshipper of stocks and stones. In the apocalyptic sense, however, we suppose not the man, but the doctrinal principles leading to the idolatry in contemplation, are the *rest* of the men not killed, and not repenting. This subject of idolatry, as it will be perceived, occupies the whole of the twentieth verse; we can hardly therefore be blamable for having dwelt so much upon it here.

§ 226. 'Neither repented they of their murders,' &c.—There are those, it is said, Heb. vi. 6, who crucify to themselves the son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame; something analogous certainly to the crime of murder: and these are they, as it appears from the same passage, who, after having enjoyed the knowledge of the truth of salvation by sovereign grace, have turned back to a dependence upon their own merits. After having tasted of the heavenly gift—after having enjoyed the blessed assurance of pardoning mercy, through the atoning blood of a Saviour, they have rejected all for the vain purpose of working out a propitiation and a righteousness of their own; returning as the sow that is washed to her wallowing in the mire. The devil is said to have been a murderer from the beginning, John viii. 44. His first act was to persuade his victims to make themselves as gods—bringing them into a position of condemnation or spiritual death, by rendering them obnoxious to the provisions of the law.

So we may say, every principle of doctrine tending to bring man into this position, as opposed to the *position of grace*, is the principle or doctrine of a murderer, and may be spiritually so denominated.

The term translated sorcerer, is that from which we derive the appellation given to the science of compounding drugs and medicines—*pharmacy*. The sorcerers of ancient times probably acquired their reputation in the first instance by professing to cure diseases, relieve complaints, and gratify the wishes of those coming to them for aid. A sorcerer is therefore, in Scripture, an opposite of the *true physician*; and is thus appropriately a figure of elements of doctrine professing to furnish other remedies for the diseases of the soul than those to be found in the merits of Christ. Perhaps, too, as sorcerers of old practised their arts for the purpose of obtaining money from the ignorant, and as Simon the sorcerer (Acts viii. 9) esteemed it a fair matter of trade to purchase the gift of the Holy Ghost, that he might sell it again; so the apocalyptic sorcerer may be put for principles of a mercenary character, representing the work of salvation in the light of an affair of trade or barter, in which the sinner is supposed to have given an equivalent for the grace or benefit bestowed upon him.

The nature of spiritual fornication we have already considered (§ 62) as an opposite of the dependence of the believer upon his union and accounted identity with Christ. The principles figuratively spoken of as those not repenting of this crime, we suppose to be elements of doctrine leading to other views than those of reliance upon the merits of that Redeemer, who declares himself to be also the *husband* of his church, Is. liv. 5.

Of thefts, or in allusion to such thefts as are here contemplated, it is said, Mal. iii. 8, “Will a man rob God?” Yet ye have robbed me.” We rob God, we commit a sacrilegious theft, when we set up any principle of doctrine tending to deprive Him of the glory due for our redemption. So every principle of self-righteousness, or doctrine of that character, is justly represented under the figure of a *thief*.

We thus suppose the *rest of the men* (οἱ λοιποὶ) to be deductions from literal or figurative views of Scripture, as distinguished from spiritual views; or they may be more loosely considered legal elements generally, treating the term *the rest*, or the remaining ones, as a license of vision of a character similar to that by which the four angels became suddenly metamorphosed into two hundred millions of horsemen, (vide § 255, note.)

## RETROSPECT.

This development of the *great river* system we may consider the principal feature of the *second wo*, although that *wo* is not announced as passed

till after the account given of the two witnesses, and of the destruction of the tenth of the *city* by earthquakes, Rev. xi. 14 ; the tenth chapter being taken up with something like an intermediate scene or interlude, showing, as it were, what is taking place in the councils of heaven while this second *wo* is being in operation upon earth. As the prophesying, death, and resurrection of the two witnesses is part of the second *wo*, we conclude that the incursion of the horsemen covers the same space as that represented by the history of the witnesses and the earthquake ; consequently, that the period of action of the two hundred millions of horse comprehends the twelve hundred and sixty days, and other periods of time mentioned in the vision of the witnesses. That is, if time be literally intended by these terms, the events of chapter xi. 1–14, synchronize with those of chapter ix. 14–21. We have, however, some doubts whether *time*, in a literal sense, is to be taken at all into contemplation.

Meanwhile, we rest on the supposition that the *first wo* (the locust vision) develops the baseless and self-destructive character of the system, or of any system of man's dependence upon his own righteousness, or of justification by his own works. The *second wo*, as far as represented by the four angels and their forces, equally develops the folly of the sinner's dependence upon any propitiation or system of atonement of his own working out ; the subsequent part of the second *wo* probably containing matter in confirmation of this development.



## CHAPTER X.

## THE MIGHTY ANGEL.—TIME NO LONGER.—THE LITTLE BOOK.

V. 1. And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud : and a rainbow (was) upon his head, and his face (was) as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire.

Καὶ εἶδον ἄλλον ἄγγελον ἰσχυρόν καταβαίνοντα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, περιβεβλημένον νεφέλῃν, καὶ ἡ ἵρις ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ὡς ὁ ἥλιος, καὶ οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ὡς στῦλοι πυρός·

§ 227. ‘AND I saw another mighty angel ;’—or, in the Greek order, ‘another angel mighty,’ or strong. The word another, may refer to any or all of the preceding angels ; amongst which we suppose the star, Rev. ix. 1, to have been one. The scene is not changed ; there is only an additional personage introduced—pending, we may suppose, the action of the horsemen just described. But this is not merely another angel, he is an angel mighty or strong ; so was that proclaiming the challenge for opening the sealed book, Rev. v. 2. The design of the first mighty angel seems to have been to show, in the most pointed manner, that the interpretation of the sealed book was to be made *virtually* by the Lamb, and by him only. The design of the second mighty angel is himself to present a revelation, under the figure of the little book or scroll, held in his hand ;—a message, of the character of which we may form some idea by the description given of the messenger.

‘Come down from heaven.’—As the new Jerusalem was seen coming down from God out of heaven, Rev. xxi. 2. It is a heavenly spiritual revelation, in contradistinction to any thing earthly, or emanating from the earth, or partaking of the earthly system.

‘Clothed with a cloud.’—Having wrapped himself in a cloud. So the second coming of Christ is said to be with clouds, Rev. i. 7, and elsewhere. These clouds being, as we suppose, the typical and figurative representation of him and of his second coming contained in the Scripture descriptions, through the medium of which he is intellectually to manifest himself, (John xiv. 21–26.)

‘And a rainbow upon (or over) his head;’—or *the* rainbow, as it is in some editions; referring to the rainbow before seen encircling the throne, Rev. iv. 3; supposed (§ 120) to represent the assurance of divine mercy—the token of the new covenant.

‘And his face as it were the sun;’—as it is said, Rev. i. 16, of the one like unto the Son of man, “His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength;” spiritually, the Sun of righteousness, (Mal. iv. 2.)

‘And his feet as pillars of fire;’—corresponding also with the form described, Rev. i. 16, “His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace.”

From all these particulars, we seem to be warranted in supposing this mighty or strong angel to be “the messenger of the covenant,” (Mal. iii. 1,) or, according to the Septuagint, the angel of the covenant, whom ye desire or wish for. If not Christ himself, a manifestation of the Holy Spirit, exhibiting the attributes of Christ—the promised Comforter—mighty, because his message was mighty; fully equal to that comprehended in the almost inscrutable mystery of the sealed book.

Vs. 2, 3. And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and (his) left (foot) on the earth, and cried with a loud voice, as (when) a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

καὶ ἔχων ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ βιβλαρίδιον ἀνεργμένον. καὶ ἔθηκε τὸν πόδα αὐτοῦ τὸν δεξιὸν ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης, τὸν δὲ ἐξώγνημον ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, καὶ ἔκραξε φωνῇ μεγάλῃ ὥσπερ λέων μυκάται. καὶ ὅτε ἔκραξεν, ἐλάλησαν αἱ ἑπτὰ βρονταὶ τὰς ἑαυτῶν φωνάς.

§ 228. ‘He had in his hand a *little book* open.’—The original is a diminutive of the word signifying a scroll. The term βιβλαρίδιον occurs nowhere else than in this chapter, either in the New Testament or in the Septuagint. He had in his hand a small scroll. We are not to associate, however, with this term *small* the idea of insignificance; such a diminutive being applied in some languages to any thing valued or cherished—not the less valued or less important because it is small. As in the divine manifestation to the prophet, 1 Kings xix. 11, 12, “The Lord was not in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the *still small voice*.”

From the array of the messenger, and from the presumption that the small scroll in his hand contained his message, it appears probable that this book or scroll is a representation of the subject matter of what we call the New Testament; that is, the gospel, the still small voice, as revealed to us through the instrumentality of the evangelists and apostles. This book was open, and so is the gospel open to investigation: it requires no subsequent dispensation for the interpretation of its contents; although it may require a certain enlightening of the mind to be rightly understood.

‘ And he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left\* upon the earth.’—The sea is said to be God’s, for he made it, as he formed also the dry land, (Ps. xcv. 5 ;) and the earth is also said to be his footstool, (Is. lxvi. 1.) Both of these elements are literally subservient to the power of the Creator. But we suppose, besides this, the sea to be put for a system of wrath—the legal dispensation, or something equivalent to it ; and the earth to be put for the system of man’s position under the law, dependent upon his works—eating his bread by the sweat of his brow. In the attitude of this angel, we have a symbolic picture of the complete subjection of these two systems to the gospel message :—the messenger taking his position, as it were, upon these two systems, and delivering his *glad tidings* as something called forth by them, or rendered necessary by them.

‘ And he cried with a loud voice, as a lion roareth.’—The Lamb slain is also the Lion of the tribe of Judah. The Paschal Lamb, the peace-offering for sinful man, is the lion towards every element opposed to his work of redemption. The roaring of the lion is the voice of intimidation : the time is now come for those opposed to the messenger and to his message to tremble. The purport of the voice appears to be to call attention to the subject of the message, or to the delivery of the *little book*, about to take place ; or we may connect this loud cry with the solemn declaration afterwards uttered, considering the intermediate action of the seven thunders as simultaneous.

‘ And when he cried, the seven thunders uttered their voices.’—Whatever may have been the purport of this terrific cry, it was such apparently as to call forth the opposition of these thunders. They are spoken of as *the* seven thunders specifically, according to the Greek ; although we do not find any mention elsewhere in the Scriptures of them by that number. We suppose, however, the number seven to comprehend the whole of a class, as the seven spirits before the throne, (§ 7.) Thunders and thunderings are characteristics of the legal dispensation ; we may suppose, therefore, the loud voice of the gospel messenger to call forth something in the nature of a protest on the part of the attribute of divine justice. Sinai puts in, as it were, her last claim, uttering her seven denunciations : *all* indeed that the law can urge for the condemnation of the sinner. But the voice of the Lion of the tribe of Judah is heard simultaneously with that of these judicial elements, and the Lion’s voice prevails over all others.

\* The term rendered *left*, in this passage, is said to be a word of good omen substituted by the Greeks for ἀριστερός, which was one of sinister, or bad import. So the action of this angel, whether as to the sea, or as to the earth, is one of good omen to men ; the messenger is one of glad tidings—Rob. Lex. 277, art. Εὐαγγέλιος.



V. 4. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

Καὶ ὅτε ἐλάλησαν αἱ ἑπτα βρονταί, ἔμελλον γράφειν· καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ λέγουσαν· σφραγίσον ἃ ἐλάλησαν αἱ ἑπτά βρονταί, καὶ μὴ αὐτὰ γράψῃς.

§ 229. 'I was about to write, and I heard,' &c.—Whatever may have been the import of the language of these thunders, it is very evident that it is not permitted to form a part of this *unveiling* of Jesus Christ. The voice of wrath is now silenced, the law has been fulfilled "by the obedience of one," (Rom. v. 19,) and a declaration now of its claims, like irrelevant matter, is not permitted to go upon the record.

'Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.'—So far as the message of this angel is concerned, the denunciatory or accusatory matter contained in the voice of these thunders is done with; like documents offered upon a trial, not admitted as evidence, they are to be laid aside. They are not permitted to interfere with the delivery of the *little book*, or to pervert the interpretation of its contents. Accordingly we find no further mention made, either of the seven thunders or of their voices. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?

Vs. 5, 6, 7. And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be [shall be] time no longer. But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

Καὶ ὁ ἄγγελος, ὃν εἶδον ἑστῶτα ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ἤρε τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ τὴν δεξιὰν εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, καὶ ὤμωσεν ἐν τῷ ζῶντι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ὅς ἐκτίσεν τὸν οὐρανόν καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ, καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ, καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ, ὅτι χρόνος οὐκέτι ἔσται· ἀλλὰ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς φωνῆς τοῦ ἑβδόμου ἀγγέλου, ὅταν μέλλῃ σαλπίζειν, καὶ ἐτελέσθῃ τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὡς εὐηγγέλισε τοὺς ξυνοῦτοῦ δούλους τοὺς προφήτας.

§ 230. 'Lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth,' &c.—Here we have a confirmation of the supposition, that the mighty angel controlling the sea and the earth, or the mysteries represented by them, is the Deity himself, either in the character of the Son, or that of the Holy Spirit, or Comforter. "Swear (vow) not at all," is an injunction applicable to every created being. He only can swear to what shall be, or what shall not be, who is himself the efficient cause of all things; and this *oath* of the angel is not merely an attestation as to a fact; it is the expression of a determination that such shall be the fact. The angel does not swear by the earth, or by the sea, but by the living God, who made these creatures of his power, both in a natural and in a spiritual sense. So,

when God made a promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, Heb. vi. 13.

‘That there should be [shall be] time no longer.’—This declaration appears the more extraordinary, since immediately after it, in the three succeeding chapters, specific periods of duration are seven times mentioned, under the different forms of days, months, and years or times. Our first thought is, that the Greek compound particle *οὐκέτι* should be rendered as two separate particles, *οὐκ* and *ἔτι*, *not yet*, instead of *no more*, signifying that the time of development should not be till after the expiration of the several periods about to be mentioned; but in this supposition we are not borne out either by the use assigned by grammarians to this compound particle alone or to the two particles; or by the construction necessarily given them in other portions of Scripture; or by the rendering of this passage in other versions, which all, as far as we have examined, agree in assigning the meaning *no longer* to the term employed.

“*Ἐτι* alone” (says Buttman) “signifies *yet, further*; and with the negatives *οὐκέτι, μὴκέτι, no more*.” (Everett’s trans. Boston, 1822, p. 265.) So Rev. xxi. 4, *θανάτος οὐκ ἔσται* cannot be otherwise rendered than there shall be *no more* death; and *πόρος οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι*, there shall be *no more* pain. So Luke xv. 19, *οὐκέτι εἰμὶ ἄξιος*, I am *no more* worthy; and Philemon 16, *οὐκέτι ὡς δοῦλον*, *not now, or no longer* as a servant. The six versions of Bagster’s Hexapla accord with this rendering, there shall be time no longer, or there should be no longer time. To which we may add the Latin of Leusden, *tempus non amplius esset*, and of Beza, *tempus non fore amplius*: the Spanish, *que no habrá ya mas tiempo*; and the Italian, *che il tempo non sarebbe più*, both from the Vulgate: the German, (Luther,) *das hinfort keine zeit mehr seyn soll*: and the French, *qu’il n’y aurait plus de tems*. This uniformity of rendering leaves us no room to suppose any other meaning to the particles in question, whether written in connection or separately, than that of *no more, no longer*. (See also Rob. Lex. 525, Suiceri Lex. et al.)

What then is the apocalyptic sense of the declaration, *that time shall no more be, or no more shall be*? the verb being in the future tense, and precisely of the same form as that rendered, Rev. xxi. 4, by the sign *shall*.

We presume the expression is no more to be taken in a literal sense than others of this mystic relation. The word *χρόνος* strictly denotes, it is said, the idea of time, in its simple abstract form, which we perceive and measure by the succession of objects and events. (Tittmann v. Rob. Lex. 835.) It would be difficult to imagine a state of things, even in eternity, in which there is literally no succession of objects and events—in which there are no revolutions of the heavenly bodies, or in which these revolutions are not successive, or if successive, incapable of marking duration or

portions of time. But if this were the fact, there is nothing in this portion of the vision calling for the introduction of the subject. Whether we take the book spiritually, or literally, there is nothing in this part of the revelation, apparently, having any connection with the question, whether the idea of eternity admits of that of time or not. There is, however, an important point coming under consideration, connected with the subject of chronology, and that is, what we are to understand of the periods of time, *forty-two months, one thousand two hundred and threescore days*, &c., mentioned in the next and succeeding chapters. To meet this case the preparatory explanation is now given, in the form of a solemn declaration; as if to set any question on the matter entirely at rest. There shall be no more *time*. Time in a literal sense, as far as the objects of this vision are concerned, is no longer to be contemplated. The several periods alluded to as measures of time, are spiritually measures of vision—indices of parallelisms, showing, perhaps, the correspondence of one series of figures with another. When we meet with these, therefore, we are to set the idea of duration, in its literal sense, entirely aside; as in the measurement of the space covered by the blood of the wine-press, (Rev. xiv. 20,) we set aside the idea of length or breadth, in a literal sense, of the sixteen hundred furlongs; and as we also set aside the association of any literal ideas with the number (two hundred millions) of the horsemen mentioned in the last chapter.

§ 231. ‘But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel,’ &c.—If this term *days* be taken in a literal sense, there is apparently a great inconsistency in the oath: first, that time shall be no more, and then that certain things are to take place in a time to come, or in a subsequent period specified. The reasonable conclusion seems to be, that the expression, “in the days,” &c., is put for the whole of the development of truth or revelation made through the instrumentality of this angel; the days of the voice of the seventh angel being a figure of speech for the portion of revelation allotted to that angel. Time, as regards the matter of this vision, is not to be taken into consideration; but the revelation of the seventh trumpet will be the conclusion of the mystery of God. The expression in the original *ὅταν μὲλλῃ σαλπίζειν* would be more properly rendered, *when he is to sound*, equivalent to *when he is sounding*, or *when his trumpet is being sounded*; corresponding with the previous expression, in the days of the voice, &c., which comprehends the whole compass of the voice. We are to look, therefore, to the whole matter announced under this seventh trumpet, as the *finishing* of the mystery of God.

The conjunction *καὶ* immediately before the word *ἐτελέσθη*, if rendered by *and*, throws a difficulty in the way of the interpretation. Our common version does not notice it at all, neither does that of Wiclif, 1380, or of Rheims, 1582; but the Tyndale, Cranmer, and Geneva versions, render it by the



word *even*: “*but in the dayes of the voyce of the seventh angell, when he shall begyn to blowe, even the mistery of God shall be fynysshed.*” The Latin of Leusden renders it by *et*, which, like the Greek *καὶ*, may signify *etiam*, *also*; the version of Luther by the German particle *so*, equivalent to *even*, which may be considered in the light of an intensive; and as the declaration corresponds very much in character with that of Jesus, John iv. 23, the *καὶ* may have the same sense as it is supposed to have there, viz., that of *yea, verily, &c.*, Rob. Lex. 333, and 334. “But the hour cometh, and now is: yea, verily, now is.” So, in this passage of the Apocalypse, the angel solemnly avers that time is not to be considered in the vision; nevertheless the revelation under the seventh trumpet’s sound shall verily complete, or finish, the unfolding of the mystery of God. If, besides, we give to *but* at the commencement of the seventh verse the force of a sign of contradistinction, the declaration will then be equivalent to this,—that time shall be no longer; *but*, that is, *so far from there being a continuance of time*, (in this vision,) as soon as the seventh angel begins to sound, even then the mystery of God is to be considered as finished. Time is not to be supposed to elapse afterwards; consequently the periods of days, times, and months, mentioned under the sounding of that seventh trumpet, are not to be considered literally terms of duration. Here we have a sufficient reason for the solemnity of the oath, as nothing but this construction of the declaration can put an end to calculations respecting the periods afterwards mentioned; while this construction itself is all-important to a proper understanding of the whole book.

We find the term *mystery of GOD* employed nowhere else in the Scriptures except Col. ii. 2; and there, according to the common version, it is also put for the *mystery of Christ*—the apostle praying for them of Laodicea, “that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, *in whom* are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;” or, as the original might be rendered, the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, (*τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ,*) in *which*, that is, *in which mystery*—ἐν ᾧ the Greek pronoun being in this case masculine or neuter—in which mystery are all the hidden treasures (*οἱ θησαυροὶ ἀπόκρυφοι*) of wisdom and knowledge. Such we suppose to be the *mystery of God*, the finishing of which is the subject of the seventh trumpet’s voice. No doubt the same as the mystery of faith, 1 Tim. iii. 9; the mystery of godliness, 1 Tim. iii. 16; the wisdom of God in a mystery, 1 Cor. ii. 7; the mystery of Christ, Eph. iii. 4; the mystery of the Gospel, Eph. vi. 19, and elsewhere: the same mystery, perhaps, viewed under so many different aspects. In conformity with this construction, we presume the subject of the seventh trumpet’s voice to be a final development of the doctrinal elements of the divine plan of redemption—the

*hidden* or mystic treasures of wisdom and knowledge ; as in contradistinction to all other wisdom and knowledge not immediately pertaining to this mysterious subject.

§ 232. ‘As he hath declared to his servants the prophets ;’—or, verbatim, as he evangelized his servants the prophets. The prophets were made the repositories of this mystery. It is not expressly stated that they declared it to others, but it may be fairly inferred that this mystery constituted the subject or burden of their predictions. This fact is important in guiding us to a right understanding of the vision ; for if the mystery of God, unfolded by the voice of the seventh trumpet, be the same as that committed to the prophets, and contained in their symbolical writings, then this vision must correspond with the prophecies ; and a true construction of the one must admit and conform to a like construction of the other. Unless our interpretation, of this portion of the New Testament especially, be sustained by something of a similar import in the books of the Old Testament, we can have no confidence in it. And this is to be predicated not merely of the writings of one prophet, but of those of all who in Scripture language are denominated prophets ;—as Jesus, in his walk with the two disciples after his resurrection, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, expounded unto them in *all* the Scriptures the things concerning himself. The mystery of this vision is not a new one : it is the old mystery committed to the prophets—given them in charge ; perhaps in figures, of which some of them had more understanding than others ;—all (angels or messengers) desiring to *look into these things*, (1 Pet. i. 12,) as Jesus himself says many prophets and kings desired to see and hear things which the Jews were permitted to see and hear while he was upon earth. Still more, no doubt, did they desire to know things with the knowledge of which the disciples were favoured after the descent of the Holy Spirit. In the same figures in which this mystery was received by the prophets, it was probably handed down by them. With these prophetic figures, therefore, we must compare those of the Apocalypse, that our interpretation may be in conformity with both. We do not mean by this a mere correspondence of dates and events, in the ordinary sense of those terms ; but a correspondence of truths or doctrinal principles, showing that the gospel mystery preached by the apostles, and exhibited in this vision, is the same as that predicted by the prophets, and illustrated by the symbols of the Old Testament dispensation.

Vs. 8, 9, 10. And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go, (and) take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take (it)

Καὶ ἡ φωνή, ἣν ἤκουσα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ· πάλιν λαλοῦσα μετ’ ἐμοῦ καὶ λέγονσα· ὕπαγε, λάβε τὸ βιβλαρίδιον τὸ ἠνεωγμένον ἐν τῇ χειρὶ τοῦ ἀγγέλου τοῦ ἐστῶτος ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. Καὶ ἀπῆλθον πρὸς τὸν ἄγγελον, λέγων αὐτῷ δοῦναι μοι τὸ βιβλαρίδιον. καὶ λέγει μοι· λάβε καὶ

and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it my belly was bitter.

κατέφαγε αὐτό· καὶ πικραεῖ σου τὴν κοιλίαν, ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ στόματί σου ἔσται γλυκὺ ὡς μέλι. Καὶ ἔλαβον τὸ βιβλαρίδιον ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς τοῦ ἀγγέλου, καὶ κατέφαγον αὐτό· καὶ ἦν ἐν τῷ στόματί μου ὡς μέλι γλυκύν· καὶ ὅτε ἔφαγον αὐτό, ἐπικράνθη ἡ κοιλία μου.

§ 233. 'And the voice which I heard from heaven,' &c.—Apparently the voice mentioned in the fourth verse of this chapter, as directing the apostle to seal the things spoken by the seven thunders, and not to write them. The same voice, probably, as that calling the apostle up into heaven, Rev. iv. 1. The voice from the heavenly economy checking the expression of judicial intimidation, while it favours the promulgation of gospel truth.

'Go and take the little book.'—The apostle is directed to procure the little book, no doubt for the purpose of qualifying himself for the duty he is afterwards to perform. The direction to go and take, &c., is given with the prescience that the book, when taken, is to be eaten or participated in.

'And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up,' &c.—The figure is not so strange as it appears to be when first noticed. The Psalmist says of the law, commandments, testimony, precepts of God, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! (yea, sweeter) than honey to my mouth. Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way," Ps. cxix. 103, 104. Here is a supposed eating of the book; for if not eaten its sweetness could not be known. And the reason for this sweetness is at the same time made known, viz., that *it gives understanding*; such an understanding of the truth as to excite a hatred of every thing false. So we may presume the cause of the sweetness of the little book, in the mouth of the apostle, to be in the understanding which it affords—the understanding of spiritual things. Where the book is understood it is sweet, where it is not understood it is bitter. "And it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey." "And it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it my belly was bitter." This we may presume is not a vain repetition. The prediction on the part of him who gave the book, and the statement of the correctness of this prediction on the part of the recipient, like the testimony of two witnesses, establishes the fact; and this no doubt is done to show the peculiar importance of this fact, as something to be borne in mind throughout the narration.

The mouth, as the organ of the mind, and as a member of the head—the nobler part—we suppose to be a figure of the spiritual understanding; the faculty of taking the language of revelation in its spiritual sense. The belly, on the contrary, as the organ merely of the physical appetites, and as constituting the ignobler portion of the body, we suppose to be put for the



literal understanding, or of the inferior faculty of the mind, capable only of receiving the word of revelation in its ordinary or *literal* sense.

The little book, when eaten, produced two different sensations ; the cause of this difference being not in the book, but in the organs by which it was received. The same scroll was sweet to the mouth, but bitter to the belly. So to the literal understanding the revelation of the New Testament appears to be a refinement upon the law, pointing out a more perfect and exact method by which man is required to work out a righteousness of his own. To such, the new dispensation is even more bitter than the old. They see in it no provision of divine mercy. They admire its searching moral precepts, extending to the heart or mind, as well as to the outward conduct, which is all they understand by its *spirituality* ; but they groan under its requisitions, as under a burden which conscience, in proportion to their knowledge of themselves, teaches them they are unable to bear. *The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.* The natural understanding sees in the letter of the Gospel only the sentence of condemnation. To the spiritual understanding, on the contrary, there is throughout the New Testament an exhibition of the plan of divine mercy. The rigid exactions of the law indeed are perceived, but they are recognized as conductors, leading the humbled, convinced sinner, to feel his need of a Redeemer. The more the spiritual mind perceives its inability to fulfil the law, the greater is its reliance upon the provision of divine mercy. Thus, to be literal, or to be carnally-minded, is death ; but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace : and thus the same word of revelation which to one recipient is as honey and the honey-comb, to another appears as the bitter of gall, and as the poison of asps.

When, by a spiritual understanding of the whole tenor of Scripture, we perceive our justification and salvation to be wrought out, through the imputed merits and sufferings of our Redeemer—when we see that, as Christ has suffered for us, we are not to suffer for ourselves—then the contents of the little book appear *sweet*, yea, as honey to the mouth ; for we then enjoy an antepast of the blessedness of him whose iniquities are forgiven—of him to whom sin is not imputed. But when, by a literal construction of the language of revelation, we conceive ourselves called upon to propitiate divine justice by atoning for ourselves, then the same gospel loses all its sweetness ; like the afflicted Hezekiah, for peace we have great bitterness, (Is. xxxviii. 17.)

To the hungry soul (Prov. xxvii. 7) every bitter thing is sweet ; so those who feel their need of justification while ignorant of the gospel mode of providing for it, (as drowning men catch at straws,) eagerly rest their hopes upon some requisition of the law, which they think themselves able

to fulfil. Their hope, however fallacious, is sweet to them, for they know nothing better; and in this ignorance of God's righteousness, while going about to establish their own righteousness, *they put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter*, (Is. v. 20.)

V. 11. And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

Καὶ λέγει μοι· δεῖ σε πάλιν προφητεῦσαι ἐπὶ λαοῖς καὶ ἔθνεσι καὶ γλώσσαις καὶ βασιλεῦσι πολλοῖς.

§ 234. 'Thou must prophesy again,'—or, it behoveth thee to prophesy. This we may suppose to be assigned as a reason why the apostle was required to eat the little book, or scroll, viz., that by receiving this revelation in both senses, he might be qualified so to transmit it to others in the same manner. A case somewhat similar to this is described by one of the prophets, (Ezek. ii. 9, and iii. 1–4,) "And when I looked, behold, a hand (was) sent unto me; and lo, a roll of a book (was) therein. \* \* \* \* Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness. And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and *speak with my words unto them*." So the apostle is made in this vision to eat of the little book or scroll, and to receive it in both senses, and to experience the difference alluded to in the two ways of receiving it, in order that he may speak *with the words of Him* from whom the revelation is received—transmitting it as he received it, and giving his own experience of the difference as stated, that others may compare this difference with their experience, and make the discrimination necessary to render the communication sweet—or to know the cause of its bitterness, if such should be its taste.

'Before many peoples,' &c.—The interpretation of Scripture, as of the divine will, is prophecy. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy, Rev. xix. 10. All who bear testimony of the truth, as it is in Jesus, prophesy. The testimony itself prophesies. So John might be here addressed as the representative of all who succeed him in laying this portion of the word of God before the world. Indeed we may say of this apostle that, by *his gospel*, his epistles, and this book, he does prophesy, and has done so before many peoples and nations, &c.; but this may be equally said of other apostles, and we think the text implies something more.

The word ἐπὶ, rendered here *before*, might be more properly translated *upon*, in the sense of about or concerning; as to speak or write *upon* a subject, is to speak or write concerning it. So ἐπὶ with a dative is used, it is said, instead of ἐπὶ with the genitive, after verbs of speaking, signifying

of, about, &c., as in this passage, προφητεῦσαι ἐπὶ λαοῖς καὶ ἔθνεσι, κ.τ.λ., “to utter predictions *respecting*,” &c. (Rob. Lex. 243.)\* The word πάλιν, *again*, involves the idea of repetition, as does also its Latin equivalent *iterum*, from the verb *itero*, *iterare*, to do a thing the second time, to begin again, to begin afresh. (Ainsworth.)

It behoveth thee to prophesy over again, or anew—*dì nuovo*, as we find it expressed in an Italian version of the Bible of 1716—to begin again, to prophesy a second time, concerning many people and nations, (Gentiles,) and tongues, and kings or kingdoms. The ground of the prophecy, we suppose to be the same as that already gone over, but the manner in which it is to be put forth is different—the same truths illustrated by different figures.

The apostle could not be said to have prophesied previously *before* many *people*, &c., but he had been prophesying concerning them, or concerning that which is represented by them; as Rev. v. 9, and vii. 9, where some are represented as rejoicing; and Rev. vi. 15, and ix. 6, where others are exhibited as suffering. He is now, therefore, to repeat, or *to go over afresh*, exhibitions of a similar character, and pertaining to the same subjects. For this end he is to be qualified by receiving the little book; by having it as it were in him—being fully imbued with its contents, both in their spiritual and literal sense. Thus qualified, he is prepared to impart what he receives to others in the same twofold sense. This is not expressed, but it is implied, else what has the exhibition of this chapter to do either with the previous or subsequent matter of the book?

#### RETROSPECT.

§ 235. The scene presented by this chapter appears to be of the character of an interlude, not however to divert or distract attention, but to prepare the mind for a right understanding of the subsequent exhibition.

The mission of the mighty angel has a threefold object: to deliver the little book—to announce the cessation of time—and to make known the double sense of the revelation contained in the little book.

Connecting the account given of this extraordinary book with the declaration of the angel concerning the mystery to be finished in the sounding of the seventh trumpet, it appears reasonable to suppose that this book con-

\* Ἐπὶ with the accusative has the same signification after verbs of speaking, (Rob. Lex. 245.) So προφητεύσον ἐπὶ τὰ ὀστᾶ ταῦτα, (Ezek. xxxvii. 4, Sept.) should be rendered *prophecy concerning* these bones, instead of *on* these bones; or such is the idea to be associated with the term *on*. See also Ezek. xxxiv. 2, where *about* may be substituted for *against*.



tains the mystery alluded to ; as if it were in consequence of eating the book, that the apostle was enabled to contemplate and to record the mysteries of the seventh trumpet. Not that these mysteries are in the nature of *addenda* to the gospel, or that they have not been otherwise exhibited, but that this little book and the voice of the seventh trumpet contain a summary of the gospel revelation ; the revelation of the mystery of God, under the head of this seventh trumpet, being the last mode of illustration by which this mystery of the gospel is made known. For when it is said, that in the days of the voice of this trumpet the mystery of God shall be finished, it is very plain that the mystery is put for the exhibition of the mystery. The mystery itself, or purpose of the divine mind, has been complete from all eternity ; the making of it known only is the thing to be finished : as if it had been said, in the days of the voice of the seventh trumpet the development of the mystery of God shall be completed.

Preparatory to understanding this development, we are then to be taught that the terms of days, months, times, &c., occurring frequently in the voice of this trumpet, are not terms of time ; that no chronological period literally is intended by them ; and further, that whatever may be the descriptions and language of this vision, the whole of which may be represented by the little book, they are susceptible of being taken in two senses—the spiritual and literal—the first of which is as sweet as the other is bitter.

We do not suppose these peculiarities of the Apocalypse to commence in this place ; we suppose them to belong to the former part of the narration as much as to the subsequent ; but this is the stage of revelation in which it has become proper more especially to make these explanations. As it might be said that thus far there was scarcely a possibility of taking the matter revealed in a literal or temporal sense, but in the subsequent portion of the book there is much which might be so taken ; so, in the former part, the notion of time is hardly hinted at ; but in the part to come, chronological terms are so much employed, that it is now absolutely necessary to guard against their misconstruction.

It may be said that under the proposed construction of the term *time no longer*, we must set aside also the periods of time mentioned in the book of Daniel, and thus lose the support of so much prophecy in identifying the epoch of the coming of the Messiah. But, besides that in the book of Daniel there is no such angelic declaration as we have here, there is also this important difference between the two : Daniel assigns an era, a *from* and *after* (Dan. ix. 25, 26) whence to calculate his periods of time ; thus furnishing specific *data* by which we may ascertain whether the time of the advent in question corresponds with the prediction. But in the Apocalypse there is no *from* and *after* given : we do not know when the holy city begins to be trodden under foot, or when the woman begins her flight into the wilder-

ness, or when her sojourn there commences, or when the two witnesses *begin* to prophesy, or when the blasphemous beast first rises from the sea. To obtain the desired *date* in either of these cases we are obliged to go out of the vision, and presume a warrant for finding the other part of the prophecy elsewhere. Instead of applying the solemn declaration to the matter in hand, commentators seem to have considered it as overstepping the limits of the Apocalypse, and as anticipating some subsequent moment when all the events predicted shall have transpired—defining a state of things when, in a literal sense, there shall be no more time.

There is something peculiarly imposing in the thought of the sudden and entire cessation of time ; and we seem to be carried away with the solemnity of the idea ; as if it were necessarily a point of Christian faith that time and eternity are inconsistent with each other, or as if *time without end* must be, in effect, *no time at all*.

We know, however, almost with certainty, that if our earth and the whole solar system with which we are connected were entirely blotted out of existence, there must be other worlds and other solar systems, all having their respective revolutions requiring time and marking time. If instead of this we suppose the *end of time* spoken of to apply to the destruction of this material globe, we cannot but ask why that subject is introduced in this place. How could it be said that time shall be no longer, when immediately after the apostle is told that he has yet to prophesy before or concerning many nations, &c. ? and the whole remainder of the book is an exhibition of a multitude of events yet to transpire, if any thing like a literal succession of events be contemplated. On the other hand, under the construction we have adopted, that in this vision time literally is not to be taken into consideration, we are relieved from all these difficulties, and are enabled at once to seek an interpretation of what is subsequently related, without confining ourselves to the supposition of political or ecclesiastical events transpiring at given epochs, and limited to certain durations. Such a release from material things and temporal objects, affords us reason enough for the introduction of the scene afforded by this chapter, and particularly for its introduction in this place.

## CHAPTER XI.

## SEVENTH SEAL.—SIXTH TRUMPET.

## SECOND WO.

## THE OUTER COURT—THE HOLY CITY—THE TWO WITNESSES—THE GREAT CITY—THE EARTHQUAKE.

Vs. 1, 2. And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein; but [or, and] the court which is without the temple, leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles [nations]: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty (and) two months.

Καὶ ἐδόθη μοι κάλαμος ὅμοιος ῥάβδῳ, λέγων· ἔγρειαι καὶ μέτρησον τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον καὶ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας ἐν αὐτῷ· καὶ τὴν αὐλὴν τὴν ἔξωθεν τοῦ ναοῦ ἔκβαλε ἔξω καὶ μὴ αὐτὴν μετρήσῃς, ὅτι ἐδόθη τοῖς ἔθνεσι, καὶ τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν πατήσουσι μῆνας τεσσαράκοντα δύο.

§ 236. ‘AND there was given to me a reed like unto a rod.’—A measuring rod, no doubt, such an one as was commonly employed in measuring distances, heights, &c.

‘And the angel stood, saying.’—Καὶ ὁ ἄγγελος εἰστίχει λέγων. This reading is not the same in all editions of the Greek, although it apparently accords with the tenor of the narrative. The scene is unchanged, and the division of chapters in this place was uncalled for. The angel, after having given the little book, (the bitter and the sweet of which had been just experienced by the recipient,) and after having apprised the apostle of the prophetic function yet to be fulfilled by him, *stands* to give him further instructions; teaching him in effect how to recommence his avocation of prophesying—an avocation like that of the prophets of old, performed by actions as well as by words. Whether we admit the reading as above or not, the natural inference seems to be that the saying or bidding accompanying the gift of the reed, was that of the angel just before speaking.

‘Rise, and measure the temple of God.’—It does not appear that the apostle did measure, or that he attempted to do so; nor is any measure afterwards given of the temple, although at the close of the Apocalypse, the holy city is said to be measured, not by the apostle but by an angel; and not with an ordinary reed, but with a golden reed—a standard measure of truth. It seems probable, therefore, that this order to measure is intended



to place in a prominent light the immeasurable attributes of the spiritual temple ; as if it had been said, Measure now if thou canst ! The reed like a rod—an ordinary standard—representing human powers of admeasurement ; as it is said, Job xi. 7-9, “ Canst thou by searching find out God ? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection ? (It is) as high as heaven, what canst thou do ? deeper than hell ; what canst thou know ? The measure thereof (is) longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.” So, Eph. iii. 18, the great object of the disciple’s aspiration is represented to be the ability of comprehending the length, and breadth, and depth, and height, of the love of Christ ; while, at the same time, this love is said to be passing knowledge—beyond the compass of a finite mind.

Something of this kind is found Zech. ii. 1-5 : a man is there said to be seen with a measuring-rod, going forth to measure Jerusalem ; to see the breadth and the length thereof ; but he is stopped from doing this by a messenger, telling him that Jerusalem shall be as towns without walls, for the multitude of men and cattle, and that the Lord himself would be a wall of fire round about her. There may be some correspondence between the immeasurable love of God, and this unlimited compass of the spiritual city of the prophet, or of the spiritual temple of the apostle’s vision. The dimensions of the temple, it is true, are very particularly given by another prophet, Ezek. xl. and xli. ; but these *forms*, as they are there called, appear to be spoken of in conjunction with *ordinances*, leaving us to suppose that there may be the same difference between the temple of Ezekiel and that of John, as there is between the old economy and the new ;—the first being a figure of the legal dispensation with its prescriptions and limitations, and the last the arrangement in which the Great Object of worship giveth not the Spirit by measure.

§ 237. ‘ And the altar, and them that worship therein.’—The temple we have elsewhere (§ 98) supposed to be that arrangement by which, and in which, the disciple is enabled to worship God in spirit and in truth, (John iv. 24 ;) that is, serving God and not himself ;—such a service requiring a position obtainable only *in Christ* by adoption and imputation ; leaving the worshipper no motive of action other than that of gratitude towards his heavenly Benefactor, and zeal for his glory.

In this respect the temple of Jerusalem was a symbol of Christ, as that in which only men ought to worship, (John iv. 20 ;) a structure growing out of the love of God towards man, and on this account as immeasurable as that love itself. The altar we have also already considered (§ 161) as a figure of the word or purpose of God manifested in Christ ; upon which, and by which, his sacrifice of propitiation has been set apart. By which purpose, as upon an altar, every sacrifice of thanksgiving must be sanctified or set apart, to be rendered acceptable. In the same sense, the worshippers

in the temple, "them that worship therein," we suppose to be opposites of the Gentiles or nations—opposites of all not spiritually Jews; these worshippers in the temple corresponding with the one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed ones—principles or elements of doctrine belonging exclusively to the system of salvation by sovereign grace.

The expression "them that worship or serve therein" may refer more particularly to the priests and Levites, who were continually in the temple day and night, and whose peculiar functions were those of worship and temple service. These were sanctified and set apart by their office in the temple; as the believer is sanctified or set apart *in Christ*, and is thus spiritually in him constituted a priest, even as he is a priest. Corresponding with this, the principles or elements of doctrine upon which God is thus worshipped are represented by these servants in the temple. These elements, as well as those peculiar to the altar, are pointed out as of the same immeasurable character as the temple itself; spiritual priests or Levites being also principles divested of all selfishness of motive: opposites of the sons of Eli, who served the altar for the sake of the portion of sacrifices allotted to them; for which portion they sufficiently exhibited their extreme avidity, (1 Sam. ii. 15.)

§ 238. 'But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not.'—As the direction to measure the temple was intended to give prominence to its immeasurable character, so the order not to measure the outer court may be intended to show that this is the symbol of something not of the same unlimited character; the temple in a spiritual sense being something enduring for eternity, while in the literal sense it is only of temporary importance. So the temple, in its external or literal sense, (its outer court,) being only a symbol intended to last but for a time, does not call for the exhibition of those unlimited powers peculiar to the mystery represented by the temple proper. The external or literal sense is not of sufficient importance to be measured; it does not belong to the spiritual system of divine worship which is to be preserved from perversion.

'For it is given unto the Gentiles.'—The literal or external sense of revelation is the subject of perversion; the spiritual sense may be hidden, but when developed it cannot be perverted. Something else may be mistaken for it, but the correct spiritual sense itself remains the same; it is incapable of sustaining or of giving countenance to a false system of salvation. So, the arrangement of principles peculiar to the worship of God, represented by the outer court or temple in its literal sense, is that only which is subject to the influence of the elements of self-righteousness, figuratively spoken of as *the Gentiles* or nations—the uncircumcised—the opposites of the spiritual Jews.

'And the holy city they shall tread under foot forty and two months.'—

It is not expressed, but it seems to be implied, that the possession of the outer court of the temple by the Gentiles is a figure equivalent to that of their treading the holy city under foot ; the first figure involving the last : the temple being in the city, and possession of the city being requisite for a possession or control of the court of the temple. The holy city we suppose to be Jerusalem ; but not the new Jerusalem, or new vision of peace, such as it is seen by the apostle when coming down from heaven, (Rev. xxi. 2.) It is the vision of peace, as discerned in a literal construction of the language of revelation, corresponding with the Jerusalem *that now is*, spoken of by Paul, (Gal. iv. 25.) Jerusalem in bondage to the Romans, was literally the holy city trodden under foot by the Gentiles. So the vision of peace revealed in the Scriptures, under a literal construction of that revelation, is in bondage or brought into subjection to self-righteous and legal principles. The mysteries of redemption are thus in the possession of these erroneous principles, as a captured city is in possession of the conquerors. So we may say of the sacred Scriptures, figuratively speaking, while in the hands of interpreters insisting upon the literal sense, they are in a state of captivity, deprived of the liberty or power of promoting the glory of God, by a just development of the truth ; as the children of Israel were prevented by the Egyptian despot from going forth from their place of bondage to worship or serve their God, as they had been directed.

The verb *πατέω* strictly signifies only *treading*, (Rob. Lex. 561 ;) treading the city being equivalent to holding possession of it, or dwelling in it ; and this seems to be all that the sense here requires. As the Gentiles were to have possession of the outer court of the temple, so they were to have possession of the city. The difficulty is, that the enemy has *possession* ; the captured party is under constraint, deprived of the liberty of performing its proper functions. So the mysteries of the true worship of God and of the true means of salvation, as revealed in the Scriptures, while under the control of legal, self-righteous, and literal rules of construction, are also under constraint, incapable of exhibiting the truth according to its spiritual and proper sense.

§ 239. Although the possession of the court of the temple, and that of the holy city, are in some degree equivalent figures, we do not suppose them to signify precisely the same thing. The *temple*, with its precincts and appurtenances, apparently represents the elements of the economy of grace pertaining more especially to the worship of God ; while the *city*, with all its peculiar properties, represents that portion of the same arrangement of grace, applying more particularly to the eternal salvation of the believer.

“ One thing have I desired of the Lord,” says David, “ that will I seek after ; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.”—That is,



to inquire into the mystery represented by the *temple proper* ; the spiritual arrangement of principles by which the worshipper is enabled to come unto God *in Christ*.—"For in the time of trouble," the Psalmist adds, "he shall hide me in his pavilion ; in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me ; he shall set me upon a rock."—Here are three figures of the same position of safety. To be in the *pavilion* of God, is to be in Christ ; to be in the secret of the tabernacle of God, is to be in Christ ; and to be set upon a rock, is to rest upon Christ as upon a foundation. In this position it is that the disciple is enabled to draw near to God, and to *offer in his tabernacle* sacrifices of joy and gratitude, (Ps. xxvii. 4-6.)

It is commonly admitted by all who bear the name of Christ, that he is the only way of access to God ; that we must come unto God in his name ; that he is the only mediator ; but the ordinary apprehension of this privilege is very superficial, and little better than literal. Such as it is, we may compare it to the outer court of the temple. It is subject to great perversion. It is in the possession of the elements of literal construction, as the outer court was given to the Gentiles. The intercession or mediation of Christ, in the ordinary sense, is supposed to be an *oral* intercession—a pleading as by word of mouth ; while, in a spiritual sense, it must consist in a virtual intervention of his merits—of his imputed righteousness. In the first sense, it is evident that doctrinal views may be admitted inconsistent both with the divinity of Christ and with the truth of salvation through his righteousness alone ; in the last sense, these erroneous principles can find no place, for the *virtual* intercession or mediation of the *merits* of Christ involve the truths of his divine nature, and of salvation through his imputed merits alone. Such, we suppose, to be the difference between the temple and the outer court of the temple.

A city or walled town is a place of safety and comfort—a dwelling furnished with the means of shelter, food, and defence. Such is the economy of grace with reference to its immediate object—the salvation of the sinner—"A city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God." A self-righteous plan of salvation, on the contrary, is a city without a foundation, of which man only is the builder and maker. Here, it is said, (Heb. xiii. 14,) we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come ; we have no means of salvation in any merits of our own. As it was said of the wandering Hebrews in the desert, "they found no city to dwell in." In the wilderness of Sinai, as under the threatening of the law, their position was that of the disciple out of Christ, and unprotected by the imputation of his merits. In Christ only, we find a shelter from the wrath to come—a defence from the power of the legal accuser, and the means of obtaining and of sustaining eternal life ; out of him our condition is spiritually analogous to that of the people of God during their sojourn in the desert.

This position in Christ, we suppose to be the same as that afforded by the holy city in its proper spiritual sense, that is, the economy of grace. This economy, however, has been misunderstood in proportion as the language of Revelation in respect to it has been literally construed. The new Jerusalem, it is true, has been supposed to be in some way a representation of the mystery of redemption; but the holy city has been in possession of the Gentiles. The vision of peace has been perverted by self-righteous elements of doctrine; even so much so, that, in the apprehension of many, the *object* of salvation (the community of disciples) has been substituted for the *means* of salvation, the plan of sovereign grace.

The same erroneous principles have thus perverted the language of Scripture, in respect to the views peculiar to the worship of God, and to the salvation of the sinner. The city and the outer court of the temple have been alike trodden by the Gentiles.

§ 240. 'Forty and two months.'—This is the time during which the Gentiles were to have possession of the city; and it seems to be implied that the gift of the outer court to them was to be of a corresponding duration; the term forty-two months applying to both. This period has been supposed to be equivalent to one of twelve hundred and sixty years, calculating in round numbers thirty days to the month; and various efforts have been made to assign this term of time, in a literal, chronological sense, to a certain portion of ecclesiastical history; but for the reasons already given (§ 230) we believe time in this literal sense is not to be taken into consideration. With those engaged in contemplating the mysteries of this vision *there is time no longer*. It is remarkable, however, that the several mystic terms of time, in this and in the following chapters, correspond so nearly with each other, taking the expression time, and times, and half a time, to be synonymous with that of a year, two years, and half a year; a construction now very generally admitted.\* These various periods all resulting, in round numbers, in a term of twelve hundred and sixty days.

As already suggested we can only account for this peculiarity, by supposing these various terms of an equal period to be intended to point out a certain parallelism in the predictions severally connected with them. In applying this mystic scale, we conceive it as reasonable to convert the twelve hundred and sixty days into forty-two months, as to turn the forty-two months into days; and we feel the same liberty to turn the months, or days, into three and a half years, as we should in changing the years into days. As far as the parallelism of apocalyptic predictions is concerned this distinction may not be important, but it may be of service in throwing light upon other portions of Scripture; by enabling us to compare the figures of this vision with some of the historical relations of the Old

\* See Faber and others.

Testament.\* At present we confine ourselves to the conclusion that this term of forty-two months is intended only to indicate the coincidence of the treading of the Gentiles, with the prophesying of the two witnesses in sackcloth for twelve hundred and sixty days; and that the two terms are designed to point out this Gentile predominance and prophesying in sackcloth, as coincident with the sojourn of the woman in the wilderness, (Rev. xii. 6 and 14,) and with the power given to the beast, (Rev. xiii. 5.)

In a literal sense, the Holy City was trodden by the Gentiles (the Romans) in the time of the apostles; and although the possession of it afterwards changed hands, there has been no time for the last eighteen hundred years that it has not been subject to Gentile power. In a spiritual sense it would be equally difficult to say when it was since the days of the crucifixion, that the mysterious truths represented by the outer court, and by the city, have not been perverted in their exhibition by the influence of incorrect doctrinal principles. It is easy to point out twelve hundred and sixty years during which the city of Jerusalem was possessed by Gentiles; but it is not so easy to point out a single hundred years of the Christian era, when it was not in the same predicament. In a literal sense, too, the temple was destroyed in the time of the Emperor Titus, not one stone being left upon another. Not only the outer court, but the temple itself, was in this sense given to the Gentiles; and there can hardly be said to have been a period admitting of discrimination between the temple and the outer court since. We seem to be shut up, therefore, to the conclusion above adopted, that the employment of these terms of time is altogether of a mystical character, designed to direct the attention to a species of synthesis, or combination, or collation of the several representations accompanied with these marks of identity, as so many different features of one picture.

Vs. 3. 4. And I will give (power) unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred (and) threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

Καὶ δώσω τοῖς δυοῖν μάρτυσίν μου, καὶ προφητεύσουσιν ἡμέρας χίλις διακοσίας ἑξήχοντα περιβεβλημένοι σάκκους. Οὗτοί εἰσιν αἱ δύο ἐλαῖαι καὶ αἱ δύο λυχνίαι αἱ ἐνώπιον τοῦ κυρίου τῆς γῆς ἑστῶτες.

§ 211. 'I will give unto my two witnesses.'—The word *power* is not in the original. It would probably be a better rendering to say, I will give

\* There is evidently a strong analogy between the history of the children of Israel, from their *exodus* to their possession of the promised land, and the experience of the Christian disciple in matters of doctrine, or his progress in faith from his first perception of the bondage of the law to his full enjoyment of gospel truth. Our limits, however, will not admit of enlarging upon this illustration at present, except to remark that there may be a like analogy between these three and a half *year-terms* of the Apocalypse and the three and a half years' drought in the time of the prophet Elijah.



*in charge* to my two witnesses. This is the part to be given them—the duty assigned them to perform. To give *power*, simply implies a liberty of exercising the power or not; but to give *in charge*, while it implies the gift of power, also leaves no election to the agent, whether to discharge the function assigned or not. Whatever these two witnesses represent, it is something necessarily performing that which God designed should be performed by it.

‘My two witnesses;’—or, as it might be rendered, the *two witnesses of me*. The same mighty angel is still speaking; the angel whose face was as the sun, a personification of the Son of God. His witnesses, or the witnesses of him, must be such as bear witness to his character and offices, as announced in the gospel. We suppose these to be two elements of divine revelation virtually bearing testimony to the mystery of godliness, as manifested in Jesus Christ.

‘And they shall prophesy;’—that is, *interpret* the will and purposes of God, (§ 69;) not so much in the sense of predicting events, as in that of unfolding the designs of God in the work of redemption. The two witnesses are instruments by which these designs are made known—the Old and New Covenants, or Testaments, (*διαθήκαι*;) not only as they are revealed in the Scriptures, but also as they have been in the divine mind from the beginning; for what is said of them in the subsequent verse seems to imply that they have been and are perpetually before God. The exhibition made of them in the Scriptures may be said to be their prophesying or preaching.

‘Twelve hundred and sixty days clothed in sackcloth.’—That is, apparently, they are to prophesy *in sackcloth* for this term; besides which, they may have prophesied before this period, or may do so afterwards, in a different garb. This prophesying in sackcloth is to continue twelve hundred and sixty days, a period when reduced to months, calculating thirty days to the month, corresponding with that during which the city was to be trodden by the Gentiles—showing the coincidence of the two predictions;—as if it were said, So long as the city is trodden by the Gentiles, so long the prophesying of these witnesses must be in sackcloth. In the nature of the case the one peculiarity involving the other.

Assuming these two witnesses to be the two covenants, or the legal and the gospel dispensations, as revealed in the Scriptures, they may be said to bear testimony of Christ at all times, and in all eternity, existing in the divine mind as they have done from the beginning, and witnessing in their spiritual sense throughout eternity; but they may be said to prophesy in a garb of mourning and humiliation, especially when the language in which they are revealed is so understood as to be that of the law, rather than that of the gospel.

A raiment of sackcloth was, particularly amongst the Hebrews, a sign of mourning for the dead; and spiritually it may represent a mourning on account

of the position of death or condemnation incident to the imputation of sin, as a consequence of a state of subjection to the law.

Jacob put sackcloth upon his loins, when mourning for the supposed death of Joseph, Gen. xxxvii. 34. The people were directed to gird themselves with sackcloth for the death of Abner, 2 Sam. iii. 31; and the prophet calls upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem to "Lament, like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth," Joel i. 8. From this primary use of the material it became a token of mourning generally, and a sign of humiliation and penitence.

Children, as we have before remarked, are figures of righteousnesses or merits. The sinner, brought to a conviction of his entire destitution of merit, mourns as one mourneth for a lost son; so, in the marriage relation, the husband is the figure of the Redeemer; and those convinced of sin, and without the knowledge of a Saviour, have reason indeed to lament, as a virgin girded in sackcloth for the husband of her youth. In like manner, all who contemplate man only as dead in trespasses and sins, may be compared to mourners for the dead.

§ 242. A literal and legal misconstruction of the language of revelation, both in respect to the old and new dispensations, exhibits the sinner in this state of death. It goes no further—the *letter killeth*—Christ is spoken of as a Saviour, but he is represented only as a Judge. The gospel is confessedly the glad tidings of salvation, but it is virtually exhibited only as a refinement of the law. Christ is declared to be the way of salvation; but man is in effect supposed to be dependent for eternal life upon some righteousness, or holiness, or virtue of his own. He is thus, after all that divine mercy has done for him, supposed to be left in the state of the dead; and the testimony of revelation in respect to him appears to be no other than the language of mourning. This must be so, so long as, in the exhibition of the economy of redemption, Christ is not discerned as the Lord our righteousness, and so long as the only ground of the believer's hope is not perceived to be that of sovereign grace. So long as the holy city, the vision of peace, (Jerusalem,) the exhibition of the divine plan of redemption, is in the possession, and subject to the perversion of elements of self-righteousness, so long the language both of the Old and New Testaments will appear to be the language of mourning, and so long both the old and new dispensations, as revealed in the Scriptures, will appear as witnesses indeed of Christ, but witnesses prophesying in sackcloth. The fault is not in the witnesses, or in the two dispensations, or in the Scripture account of them, but it is in that misconstruction of this account which throws over the testimony of these two covenants the garb of mourning; this misconstruction arising from the influence of self-righteous principles figuratively styled Gentiles, that is, opposites of *Jews inwardly*.

The result will not differ much if we give to these two witnesses the appellation of the law and the gospel.\* These both are witnesses of Christ—the law, used lawfully, showing the necessity of a remedy for sin; and the gospel, rightly understood, showing the provision of that remedy to be precisely such as to meet the case. The law *unlawfully* used, on the contrary, and the gospel, contemplated merely as a commentary upon the law, while they witness of Christ, can do so only in a garb of sackcloth.

We do not pretend to define a time or place where the misconstruction alluded to has prevailed; whether in the disciple's own breast, or in the world at large, or in any portion of it. Where the carcass is, it is said, there the eagles shall be gathered together. Wherever the error is to be found, there these witnesses are prophesying in sackcloth; and this so long as the exhibition of the economy of redemption to the same individual or mind is perverted by the influence of the Gentile elements of self-justification; the one peculiarity involving the other.

A clothing of sackcloth is the opposite of white raiment—the white linen, fine and clean, declared to be the righteousness of the saints; and which we take to be the imputed righteousness of Christ. The two witnesses, during the season of humiliation, do not appear clad in this livery of the household of faith. And, as in physics black is said to be nothing more than the deficiency of colour, the rays of light not being reflected, so with the witnesses, so long as they do not exhibit the robe of divine righteousness—the garment bright as the light—the want of this array causes them to appear as in sackcloth; as the Sun of righteousness, so long as his true character is not

\* We do not mean by these terms to confine our idea of the law to what is said of it in the Old Testament alone, nor our idea of the gospel to what is said of that in the New Testament alone; we consider them each, as revealed in both the Old and New Testaments;—the gospel being shadowed forth in the Levitical dispensation, as well as in the typical history of the patriarchs, and constituting the burden of the Psalms and of the prophets; and the legal dispensation being referred and appealed to, and argued upon, in setting forth the glad tidings of the New Testament.

The law and the prophets are spoken of, Rom. iii. 21, as witnessing to the righteousness of God, evidently considering them as one witness of Christ. So, Is. viii. 16, the law and the testimony are appealed to as *one* witness; and John v. 39, the Scriptures, those of the Old Testament of course—no other Scriptures being then in existence—are referred to by Christ as witnessing of him.

On the other hand, the preaching of the gospel is spoken of as “a witness unto all nations,” Matt. xxiv. 14; and the testimony of Jesus, Rev. i. 2, and xix. 10, is also spoken of as a witness; while it is said also to be the spirit, or as we may say, the essence of prophecy;—to testify and to witness being expressed by the same word in the Greek; and in fact the only difference between the terms in our language being this, that one is a Latinism and the other is Saxon. We have thus no occasion for going out of the Scriptures to find two special witnesses of Jesus. Two witnesses always prophesying; but prophesying in sackcloth only for a limited term in the sense supposed.



perceived by the spiritual understanding, appears in a *literal aspect* black as sackcloth of hair, (§ 164.)

§ 243. The children of the bride-chamber do not mourn while the bridegroom is with them; but the days come, says our Saviour, when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and then shall they *fast* or *mourn*, Matt. ix. 15; fasting and mourning being terms scripturally interchangeable, or nearly so. These days of fasting probably correspond with the days of prophesying in sackcloth. Wherever and whenever the disciple is unable to trust in his imputed identity with his Saviour, as the wife is accounted one with her husband, there the bridegroom is taken away, and there is the season for mourning and fasting; there too, “the city sits solitary,”—the economy of redemption is no longer recognized as the bride adorned for her husband. The ways of Zion do mourn—her beauty is departed, (Lam. i. 4 and 6)—the gold has become dim, and the fine gold changed.

We have only to suppose the scriptural revelation of the two covenants—the legal and gospel dispensations—to be read under the influence of such misconstruction as to cause them to appear to prophesy bitter things instead of sweet, to appear as the messengers of death rather than of life, and we shall contemplate them as two witnesses of Jesus clothed in sackcloth. Or if we suppose the law and the prophets of the Old Testament as one witness, and the gospel of the New Testament as the other witness, taken in a literal sense, (2 Cor. iii. 6, 7,) to be so construed as to carry with them a legal import only, we shall then see cause for the mourning of the children of the bride-chamber; while we also see the prophesying in sackcloth of these two instruments of interpreting the divine counsels, to be a consequence of the possession of the city by the *Gentiles*—a cause of lamentation alluded to apparently, Is. i. 21, “How is the faithful city become an harlot! It was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers,”—(principles tending to death or condemnation.) “Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water,”—(adulterated; the price of redemption being represented by that which is in reality worthless, and the atonement by that which is deprived of its exhilarating quality of joy and gladness.) “Thy princes are rebellious,”—(opposed to the sovereignty of God.) “Companions of thieves,”—(robbing God of the honour and glory due Him for the work of redemption.) “Every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards,”—(mercenary principles substituted for those of gratitude for God’s *free gift*;) “they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come before them.” There is no provision in this perverted system for the sinner in his entirely helpless state—as by nature, without any merit of his own, exposed to the condemnation of the law without a defence. A parallel allusion may be found, (Ps. cxxxvii. 4,) “How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?” How shall the redemp-

tion of Christ be celebrated amongst those who advocate a system of self-justification ; or how can gospel principles of doctrine be set forth in a legal and self-righteous system of salvation ? It is very evident that these mistaken views—this prophesying in sackcloth, and treading of the city, have not been confined literally to a period of one thousand two hundred and sixty years in the Christian church, still less to any like period prior to the Christian era ; we have again therefore, in this particular, to fall back upon the declaration of the mighty angel, *there shall be time no longer*.

§ 244. ‘These are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.’—Not merely two olive-trees, but *the* two olive-trees ; referring perhaps to the vision of the prophet, Zech. iv. 2, 7, “And he said unto me, What seest thou ? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick, all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof : and two olive-trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof.” This exhibition is declared in the sixth verse to be “the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.” The declaration is preparatory to a prediction of bringing forth the *head-stone* (or perhaps the *key-stone*, speaking of the plan of salvation as an arch) “with shoutings, Grace, grace unto it.” The two olive-trees or branches are afterwards, v. 14, declared to be the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth, corresponding very nearly with what is said in the Apocalypse of the two witnesses—“These are the two olive-trees, &c., standing before the God of the earth,” or according to the Greek, the *Lord* of the earth. The oil of olives being employed in anointing or setting apart any one to a distinguished office, the tree itself producing the oil, is put for an *anointed* person or thing set apart to some peculiar office. These two anointed ones were standing before the Lord, we may say, in the time of Zechariah, and this we suppose to have been the case with the two witnesses ; but they were not then or there perhaps in sackcloth.

These anointed ones are termed in the Septuagint the two sons of fatness. The scriptural attribute of the olive is its *fatness*, which quality in a good sense is a figure of the righteousness or merits of Christ ; the disciple, in partaking of this righteousness by imputation, being said to partake of the fatness of the good olive-tree, (Rom. xi. 17–24.) When the dove returned to Noah with an olive-leaf, he knew that the waters were abated ; and perhaps from that time to the present an olive-branch has been proverbially considered an emblem of peace and reconciliation. These two olive-trees or olive-branches are witnesses of the reconciliation of man to God. They bear testimony to the mode or process of this reconciliation ; and this we think may be affirmed of the two economies, or dispensations.

They are harbingers of peace with God, inasmuch as they exhibit the rich provision by which it is secured. Or, if we prefer it, the law and the prophets serve as one olive-branch in the Old Testament, while the gospel is seen as the other in the new; that is, when both of these are rightly understood; otherwise, so long as the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth, their true character as olive-trees is not perceived.

‘And the two candlesticks.’—There are no *two* candlesticks mentioned elsewhere in the Scriptures. The golden candlesticks of the temple were ten in number, five on each side, (two ranges,) 1 Kings vii. 49, and there was but one such candlestick in the vision of Zechariah; although the office of the two olive-trees seen by the prophet seems to have been to supply the candlestick and its seven branches with the material for giving light by means of two golden pipes, which may be equivalent to the two candlesticks of the Apocalypse. According to some editions of the Greek, however, we may read, “and two candlesticks there before the God of the earth,” &c. The witnesses are the *two* olive-trees, and certain two candlesticks. They perform the part of candlesticks in exhibiting the light of the glory of that rich provision of righteousness, which is figuratively the fatness or fullness of the olive-tree—the true means of sanctification, anointing, or setting apart: the true means by which the disciple is brought out of his position of darkness by nature into the position of God’s marvellous light, 1 Pet. ii. 9; both the old and the new dispensations being instrumental in exhibiting and carrying into effect this wonderful operation of Sovereign Grace. They are not candles, but candlesticks; they are not the light, but the means by which the light is exhibited, or imparted—not an intellectual light, but, as we suppose, the moral perfection of the Deity—spiritual light or divine righteousness *imparted by imputation* to the subjects of divine favour. As it is said, Is. lx. 19, 20, “The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.” “The Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.” The two witnesses are the instruments of exhibiting this light of divine righteousness.

‘Standing before the Lord of the earth.’—Were it not for this expression we might confine our ideas of these witnesses, olive-trees, or candlesticks, to the *written* revelations of divine mercy—the Old and New Testaments; but this *standing* seems to imply something perpetual, eternal, in the sight of the Lord, as the words ἐνώπιον τοῦ κυρίου might be rendered. Whether the light from the candlesticks be perceived by men or not; or whether the fatness or fruit of the olive-trees be recognized or not by those for whose benefit it is designed, the candlesticks and the olive-trees are ever before God. This consideration induces us to prefer supposing the two witnesses to represent the two covenants or dispensations, as they exist and have always existed in the mind of Him who is without variableness or



shadow of change. As the Creator and Preserver of all things, God is declared by the apostle (Acts xiv. 17) never to have left himself without witness ; so too as the Gracious Sovereign he has never lost sight of his purposes of mercy ; his covenants, old and new, have been with him from the beginning, and are, and have always been, and always will be, the witnesses of his loving-kindness and tender mercy—always *standing* before God, but not always revealed to man ; and when revealed, not always discerned in their true characters.

V. 5. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies : and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

Καὶ εἴ τις αὐτοὺς θέλει ἀδικῆσαι, πῦρ ἐκπορεύεται ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτῶν καὶ κατασθίει τοὺς ἐχθροὺς αὐτῶν· καὶ εἴ τις αὐτοὺς θέλει ἀδικῆσαι, οὕτω δεῖ αὐτὸν ἀποκτανθῆναι.

§ 245. ‘If any one,’ &c.—The word *man* is not in the original. The participle *τις* may be applied to man or angel, but we suppose it to be put here for *principle*. If any principle *hurt*, (§ 174,) or tend to cause these two witnesses to appear to be unjust, or wanting in righteousness, fire proceedeth out of their mouth. The action of revealed truth, comprehended in their prophesying, will devour or overcome their enemies ; corresponding with what we have before supposed to be represented by the element of fire, (§ 30.) This agent of destruction is also very plainly indicated to be a *revelation*, by its proceeding from the mouth of the two witnesses ; and these witnesses being the legal and gospel dispensations, bearing testimony as with one mouth to the goodness and glory of Jehovah, their enemies are doctrinal principles, operating against their testimony—an opposition entirely ineffectual, the matter of this testimony itself destroying these opposing principles by exhibiting their fallacy.

‘And if any one will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.’—This clause seems to be a repetition of the preceding. The sense apparently is this : If any one desire to prove them *unjust*, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, &c. ; and therefore if any one do this, in this way he must be killed, or destroyed ; that is, by the fire out of their *mouth*. Whatever the enemy be, the destruction to be encountered is of this kind ; the result of the action of the word of God through the instrumentality of the revelation made by these two witnesses. A destruction similar to that predicted of the mystery of iniquity—the man of sin—whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit or breath of his *mouth*, 2 Thess. ii. 8, and to that of the wicked, Is. xi. 4. The breath, or fire, or spirit, being the same in all these cases ; the difference being only in the instrumentality. Taking the two witnesses to be the two dispensations, the fire from their mouths is the revealed word of God acting through their instrumentality upon opposing errors, or erroneous doctrines.

It is not necessary to suppose this *killing* or *devouring* to be instantaneous. It may be something gradually and continually in operation—as the breath of the Lord is said, Is. xxx. 33, to be “like a stream of brimstone;” brimstone or sulphur, as the fuel of subterranean fire, being a figure of perpetuity. The action of *divine revelation* in the destruction of false doctrines is thus represented as something perpetually in operation, overwhelming and devouring until every opposing principle has yielded to its power. “Behold the name of the Lord cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire: and his breath, as an overflowing stream,” Is. xxx. 27, 28.

V. 6. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

Οἱ τοὶ ἔχουσι τὴν ἐξουσίαν κλείσαι τὸν οὐρανόν, ἵνα μὴ ἔτι τὸς βροχῇ τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς προφητείας αὐτῶν· καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔχουσιν ἐπὶ τῶν ὑδάτων, στρέφειν αὐτὰ εἰς αἷμα, καὶ πατάσαι τὴν γῆν ἐν πάσῃ πληγῇ, ὅσάκις ἐὰν θελήσωσι.

§ 246. ‘These have power,’ &c.—That is, such is their commission; the gift of power being equivalent to an injunction to perform that for the accomplishment of which the power or ability is given. Although these two witnesses are instruments of revealing the mystery of salvation, they are charged with doing this in such a manner as that it should be only partially understood for a certain season. And this probably for the same reason that this mystery itself has been first announced through the medium of the types and symbols of the Old Testament revelation; and for the same reason that our Saviour explained himself in parables to the multitude generally, and even to his own disciples only so far as they were able to receive it.

‘To shut heaven.’—To shut or lock up; the word in the original implying the use of a key. Heaven we suppose to be a display of the economy of redemption by symbolical representation, which, when spiritually understood, may be said to be opened or unlocked; when not so understood—when only the symbols and figurative language are apparent—it is locked or shut.

The old and new covenants, as revealed in the Scriptures, being the instruments of revealing the mysteries of redemption, have the power of *shutting* heaven, by so clothing their revelation in symbolical and figurative language as to require a *key* for interpreting, developing, unlocking, the true meaning. This power is virtually theirs; it is given or committed to them, in the nature of the case. So, to the apostles of our Lord, the keys of the kingdom of heaven were given, that, instrumentally, they might open its mysteries to some, and conceal them from others, Matt. xviii. 18; speaking some truths plainly, and clothing others in language not so easily understood

—acting indeed entirely under divine guidance, influence, and control, although apparently possessed of a discretionary power.

‘That it rain not’—or, word for word, that the rain moisten not, (Rob. Lex. 113 ;) depriving the heavenly showers of their beneficent quality. The atonement of Christ we suppose to be represented by the element of water, in the gentle action of rain or of showers, as well as in fountains and rivers. The old and new dispensations, as revealed in the Scriptures, exhibit this atonement; but it depends instrumentally upon the exhibition, or mode of exhibition, whether this provision of divine mercy appear to be one of propitiation or not. To those who understand the language of revelation in its literal sense only, the heavens may be said to be *as brass*, (Deut. xxviii. 13.) To them it affords no refreshing element. In all the types and symbols of the Old Testament, they perceive only certain curious particulars of the history of a singular people or nation; and in the New Testament, they see in the person of Jesus only a teacher of morality: in what he taught only so many moral precepts, and in his life and sufferings only an example of patience and forbearance worthy of imitation. To them heaven is shut; the rain descends not; or if it descend it moistens not. To their apprehension the atonement of Christ affords no vivifying influence.

‘In the days of their prophecy;’—that is, in the days of their prophesying *in sackcloth*. So long as they prophesy in sackcloth, it rains not, or the rain affords no moisture. The purport of the clause we take to be this: that while the interpretation of the purpose of redeeming mercy is shrouded by a legal and literal construction of revelation, there will not be that exhibition of the atonement of Christ which corresponds with the gentle and refreshing influence of rain or showers. In conformity however with our previous remarks, we do not suppose these days of their prophecy to refer literally to a period of time.

In the sense in which we have before spoken of the fasting of the children of the bride-chamber, (§ 243,) we may easily suppose two disciples in the immediate vicinity of each other, even in the same family; one of whom may be said to enjoy the presence of the bridegroom. He leans with full confidence upon the redeeming power of his Saviour. With him the days of fasting and mourning are ended; but the other has not yet reached this happy position of faith: the bridegroom is taken from him; he mourns over the conviction of his sins, and of his destitution of merit; but he discerns not the provision intended for his consolation. Corresponding with this, we suppose the two witnesses may be prophesying to some in sackcloth, while with others this season of mourning has passed away. To the first class the heavens appear *shut*, and even the rain affords no moisture; while to individuals of the latter class, the spiritual phenomena they contemplate are like the approaching summer—the *singing of birds and the*



*voice of the turtle is heard in their land.* All this may be readily imagined without reference to any chronological period, in a literal sense.

§ 247. ‘And have power over waters to turn them to blood.’—Our views of this bloody transmutation of the element of purification, have been already anticipated in treating of the second and third trumpets, (§ 190.) The waters (plural) we suppose to be waters of the earth, opposites of the rain from heaven. They represent all means of propitiation of man’s device. The prophesying of the witnesses, although in sackcloth, has the effect of demonstrating that all these proposed human means of atonement must necessarily be means of blood. They must cost the eternal life of the sinner; as man cannot atone for himself without paying the penalty of his transgressions by eternal suffering. The old and new dispensations, as revealed in the Scriptures, even when clothed in figurative language, and understood in a literal sense, have the power of showing the fallacy of all human attempts at self-justification.

‘And to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will.’—The earth we have supposed to be a system of salvation, or the position of such a system (§ 162) founded upon a literal construction of revelation, and the opposite of the display of the economy of grace represented by heaven, (§ 167.) The term rendered *plague* may be as correctly translated *strokes*, equivalent we may presume to any appliances of a standard of truth, by which the errors of a false doctrinal system may be detected. These *plagues* remind us, however, of the accounts given in Exodus of the plagues of Egypt, which suggest also the probability of an analogy between the earthly system, and that represented by the Egyptian state of bondage. The plagues of Egypt were designed to bring about the deliverance of the children of Israel; so the plagues to be administered by the two witnesses may be designed to bring to a termination the subjecting of elements of truth to the literal or legal system represented by the earth. The two dispensations, as revealed, have the power to test the earthly system, and to expose its errors as often as their elements of truth are applied to it, as a standard or criterion of judgment; which uniform capability is figuratively spoken of as *the power of smiting as often as they will*.

The earthly system may be said to furnish a dwelling, (“our earthly house of this tabernacle,”) the opposite of the position in Christ, denominated (2 Cor. v. 1) a building of God—a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. In allusion to which it is said, Ps. xci. 9, 10, “Because thou hast made the Lord (which is) my refuge, (even) the Most High, thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.” Those on the contrary who are out of Christ must be continually exposed to the powers of legal accusation—the plagues or strokes of just condemnation.

Vs. 7, 8. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies (shall lie) in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

Καὶ ὅταν τελέσωσι τὴν μαρτυρίαν αὐτῶν, τὸ θηρίον τὸ ἀναβαῖνον ἐκ τῆς ἀβύσσου ποιήσει μετ' αὐτῶν πόλεμον καὶ νικήσει αὐτοὺς καὶ ἀποκτενεῖ αὐτούς. Καὶ τὸ πῶμα αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τῆς πλατείας πόλεως τῆς μεγάλης, ἣτις καλεῖται πνευματικῶς Σόδομα καὶ Αἴγυπτος, ὅπου καὶ ὁ κύριος αὐτῶν ἐσταυρώθη.

§ 248. 'And when they shall have finished their testimony.'—Here we are again to dismiss the idea of time altogether, and to consider this finishing of the testimony of the witnesses as the end, or utmost to be accomplished by them in their garb of sackcloth. Even in this garb they had power to overcome all enemies, till the finishing of their testimony; when this was completed their power in sackcloth ceased.

'The beast that ascendeth,' &c.—The beast ascending from the *abyss*, not from the pit of the abyss mentioned Rev. ix. 2; nor was there any beast (θηρίον) said to come from that pit, unless we suppose the king of the locusts, Apollyon, to be so designated; we are obliged therefore to look further for a knowledge of this beast; and we find, Rev. xvii. 8, the beast, upon which the mother of harlots was seen to ride, to be spoken of as one to rise out of the abyss, ἀναβαίνειν ἐκ τῆς ἀβύσσου; which beast, from the description given of it, must be that seen Rev. xiii. 1, rising out of the sea, ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης. A supposition confirmed by reference to Luke viii. 31, where we find this term *abyss*, ἄβυσσος, rendered in our common version, *the deep*, as it is also Rom. x. 7; and as we sometimes speak of the sea, or ocean, as the abyss. The terms θαλάσσα and ἄβυσσος, are thus apparently in the Apocalypse interchangeable terms, in respect at least to the two passages quoted; we hence conclude that the beast making war upon and overcoming the two witnesses, is the ten-horned and seven-headed monster described in the 13th chapter of the Apocalypse.

'And shall overcome them, and kill them.'—The witnesses in sackcloth are overcome and killed; but the two olive-trees and the two candlesticks we may presume continue to stand before the God of the earth. It is only their prophesying or interpreting under what we suppose to be the literal construction of revelation that is finished. The beast does not make war upon the witnesses because they have finished their testimony; but his making war upon and overcoming and killing them, is the ordained instrumentality by which the finishing of their testimony in sackcloth is concluded. The words *shall lie* are not in the original; the carcasses are supposed to be already in the street. The witnesses are killed, their bodies only remain; and as the body without the spirit is dead, so here the literal sense remains ineffective from the absence of its spiritual meaning.

‘And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city.’—Death is but a separation of the spirit from the body—it is not annihilation. The beast could only bring about this temporary separation;—an entire separation, however, of the spiritual sense from the literal for the time being. The dead bodies of the witnesses (the revelation of the two dispensations in its literal sense) still remain amongst their opposers. The street we suppose to be the broad street, the main street, (*πλατεῖα*), and as such put for the area of the whole city. The two dispensations or covenants, entirely divested of their spiritual sense, remain in the midst of the doctrinal system, figuratively spoken of as the great city. The system subsequently represented by *Babylon the great*. So, those who reject entirely any evangelical or spiritual construction of Scripture language, still retain the Scriptures both of the Old and of the New Testaments, in the literal sense only, as a portion of their theories.

§ 249. ‘Which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.’ Our Lord was crucified at Jerusalem—the literal city of that name—in bondage in the times of the apostles to the Romans. Here, therefore, we have three distinct designations of this great city—Sodom, Egypt, and Jerusalem (in bondage,)—so called in a spiritual sense. The two first names being those of countries and not of cities, we may suppose the last Jerusalem to be put for the whole land of Judea. The identity, however, does not consist in any resemblance between the three countries in a natural or literal sense, but in some analogy capable of being drawn between each of them respectively and the figurative city, or doctrinal system or covenant, *Διαθήκη*, represented by them.

The cities of Sodom were cities of the plain; they had no rock or mountain on which to rest. They were exposed to inundation, and when submerged they sank as buildings without foundations. Besides this, the peculiar sin of Sodom, as set forth by the apostle Jude, was literally that which serves as a type or figure of a dependence upon other means of eternal happiness than those to be found in the union with Christ, illustrated by the marriage relation. In both these respects, therefore, the land of Sodom is an illustration of a false system of salvation—a system of self-dependence, of self-righteousness—a reliance upon other merits than those of Christ, figuratively spoken of by Jude as a “going after strange flesh;” and by another apostle, (2 Peter ii. 10,) as a “walking after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness,”—“despising government, not afraid to speak evil of dignities,” opposed to the principles of divine sovereignty—“presumptuous,” confiding in one’s own merits, like those who justify themselves, (Luke xvi. 15;) self-willed, acting from a motive of self-gratification and of self-interest.

The cities of Egypt were also cities of the plain, and the country a land proverbially subject to inundation, and as proverbially, perhaps, trust-



ing in its own resources; resources too often looked to as a refuge and defence by the deluded Israelites. The flesh-pots of Egypt, its vegetable productions, and its fish, as opposites of the manna from above, are figures of human merits, as opposites of the righteousness of Christ, or true bread from heaven. The fine linen of Egypt, Prov. vii. 16, is probably an opposite of that fine linen which, according to Rev. xix. 8, is the righteousness of the saints,—“No,” said the rebellious Israelites, as they are reproached by the prophet, Jer. xlii. 14, “but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread, and there will we dwell;” and this, notwithstanding the repeated admonition, Is. xxx. 1, 2, and xxxi. 1, “Wo to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my Spirit; that they may add sin to sin: that walk to go down into Egypt \* \* \* to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt.” “Wo to them that go down to Egypt for help: and stay on horses, and trust in chariots.” In addition to this, Egypt was noted for its idolatrous worship, and especially in Scripture history, as a land of bondage—a land of task-masters, of hard and servile labour. In all these particulars the country may be taken as the type of a doctrinal system, combining the characteristics of self-righteousness, self-glorification, and legality. The various shifts and devices of the human mind, in aiming to promote the glory of man, to the prejudice of the glory of God, bearing an analogy with the number and variety of Egyptian objects of worship, and the vain but laborious efforts of the mistaken disciple in going about to establish a righteousness of his own, by works of the law, bearing a like analogy to the difficult task imposed upon the enslaved Israelites of making bricks without straw.

§ 250. The city where our Lord was crucified is not mentioned by name; apparently lest it should be confounded with the *heavenly* city of the same name; but it is characterized by the remarkable event for which, and by which, it must ever be distinguished—its opposition to the Redeemer, its rejection of the Saviour, its rebellion against its king: “We will not have this man to rule over us,” may be considered the motto inscribed upon its banner. “We will have no king but Cæsar,” was the hypocritical language of the chief priests and rulers, when in reality they were opposed to the Son of God, because they did not see in him that earthly conqueror they expected to deliver their country from the power of Cæsar, and to confer upon themselves additional power and authority in their own land. They rejected him, because it was their own glory and their own exaltation that they sought, and not the honour of their Messiah. The Pharisees, and Sadducees, and lawyers, and scribes, rejected him as a spiritual Saviour, because they were insensible of any need of salvation, the one class not be-

believing in a judgment to come, and the other believing themselves sufficiently righteous to meet it when it did come. Politically, they opposed the sovereignty of Jesus, because they sought their own honour and emolument. Spiritually, they were actuated by the same motive, because they were unwilling to ascribe the glory of their eternal salvation to any other merit than their own. The city where our Lord was crucified may be thus contemplated as a type, or symbol, of a doctrinal system opposed to the element of divine sovereignty; in effect throwing off all obligation of gratitude to the Redeemer, and aiming at the promotion of man's glory instead of the glory of God.

It is easy to perceive that one erroneous doctrinal system may accord in all the particulars represented by these three several cities—cities of refuge, but all of them refuges of lies. The various and multiplied features of the three combined constituting that system of *confusion* subsequently represented in this vision, as **BABYLON** the mother of harlots.

Vs. 9, 10. And they [out] of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

Καὶ βλέπουσιν ἐκ τῶν λαῶν καὶ φυλῶν καὶ γλωσσῶν καὶ ἐθνῶν τὸ πτώμα αὐτῶν ἡμέρας τρεῖς καὶ ἡμισυ, καὶ τὰ πτώματα αὐτῶν οὐκ ἀφήσουσι τεθῆναι εἰς μνήμα. Καὶ οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς χαίρουσιν ἐπ' αὐτοῖς καὶ εὐφραίνονται, καὶ δῶρα πέμπουσιν ἀλλήλοις, ὅτι οὗτοι οἱ δύο προφηταὶ ἐβασάνισαν τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

§ 251. ‘And they of the people,’ &c.—Here our attention is called to two classes of spectators, or bystanders, “they of the people,” &c, and “they that dwell upon the earth.” Not merely people of the city, but nations, and kindreds, (tribes,) and tongues, with the dwellers upon the earth generally, are brought to behold two bodies in one street of a single city. This extraordinary license of vision is sufficient to show that nothing like a literal sense is contemplated. The *city* we suppose to be a false doctrinal system, styled *great*, in allusion to its vainglorious pretensions, as we have remarked of the great river Euphrates, (§ 219.) The dead bodies of the two witnesses, two economies, in their literal sense, (§ 248,) remain subjects of contemplation in a system utterly opposed to their spiritual sense; so the accounts given in the Old and New Testaments of the Jews, and of Christ and his disciples, as mere matters of history, and exhibitions of a moral code, not militating with a self-righteous plan of salvation, are tacitly countenanced, although their opposers would prefer, perhaps, burying them or keeping them entirely out of sight. They *out* of the people are seemingly *lookers-on*, in a state of suspense, wondering what these things should mean: not opposed to evangelical views, but as yet not pos-

sessing them, although, as indicated by their song of praise, Rev. vii. 9, 10, eventually favoured with the happy attainment. Meantime they retain their interest in the literal sense, leaning upon it, or over it, as expecting something more from it than has yet been developed. They represent, perhaps, the multitudes of subordinate principles eventually to be converted to the manifestation and promulgation of the elements of the economy of grace. They will not suffer the literal sense to be taken out of sight, the dead bodies to be put in graves. Figuratively speaking, it is not for them to desire this ; they may be said to be in the condition of a patient waiting for Christ, *preserving* the letter of revelation, keeping it in view till a spiritual interpretation can be brought to bear upon it.

‘Three days and a half.’—We must again refer here to the declaration of the mighty angel, *time shall be no longer*. These days are not to be taken in a literal sense ; but are probably intended to lead us to a comparison of this exhibition with others of a similar character. The outer court was to be in possession of the Gentiles forty-two months, equal to three years and a half. The witnesses were to prophesy in sackcloth, and to have power to *shut heaven* twelve hundred and sixty days, also equal to three years and a half ; as at the instance of the prophet it rained not for three years and a half, (James v. 17.) The woman was to dwell in the wilderness twelve hundred and sixty days, or a time, times, and half a time, (three years and a half,) and the ten-horned beast was to possess power forty-two months, or three years and a half. So also these three days and a half may be put for years, “each day for a year,” as we find prescribed in another case, (Numbers xiv. 34,) showing us that the several peculiarities of these predictions have a coincident character, designed perhaps to represent elements of truth coexistent with each other, or all of them exhibiting, by different figures, different characteristics of the same truth.

If we further suppose each day or year to represent one thousand years, (2 Peter iii. 8,) the three and a half days, or years, will be equal to three thousand five hundred years, corresponding with the period covered by the revelation of the Old Testament, from the creation to the close of the prophecy of Zechariah, or return of the Jews from their Babylonish captivity ; the termination apparently of the *typical* history of the Old Testament ; the termination of the shadowing forth of the old and new covenants in their Old Testament garb. Corresponding with this, we might consider the prophesying of the two witnesses in sackcloth a *parallel* with the whole revelation of the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

§ 252. ‘And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice,’ &c.,—or *carouse*, as the Greek might be rendered, reminding us of the drunken orgies of a victorious army after battle ; and placing these dwellers upon the earth in the light of the troops, or forces, of the beast from the bottomless pit.



We consider them elements of the abyss, or bottomless system—a self-righteous system, the opposite of the heavenly system,—without a Saviour, or without Christ as a Saviour, and consequently without a rock, or bottom, or foundation, upon which to build a hope of salvation. The advocates of such a system very naturally rejoice over the abolition of the spiritual sense from the language of revelation; they sneer, or affect to sneer, at the analogies, typical illustrations, and analytical interpretations of the figurative language of Scripture; and this with very good reason, because the arguments drawn from these illustrations, or the reasonings enforced by them, fly in the face of their self-righteous, and self-justifying, and vainglorious theories. With the same good reason they ridicule all attempts at understanding the hidden meaning, even of the most figurative portions of Scripture, for if all attempts of this kind can be checked in the first instance, a successful effort is never to be feared.

‘And make merry, and shall send gifts one to another.’—This is carrying out the idea of the carousal just remarked upon. The elements of the false system are represented as exulting over the entire exclusion of the spiritual sense of the two covenants as revealed, or something equivalent. Not only merry, they *send gifts one to another*—they become reconciled to each other, when before at enmity; as when the Son of God was put to death, the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends;—the Gentile and the Jew were here of one accord. The sending of gifts may be considered a complimentary expression of deference and respect. Here the interchange of this expression is mutual amongst these enemies of the witnesses. So it is with the opposers of evangelical views of Christian doctrine; however at variance amongst themselves, each affects to compliment the superior intellect of the other, when it becomes expedient to unite in suppressing a certain mode of illustration unfavourable to the doctrinal views of both. This we do not apply to any particular denomination or sect of religion, in the ordinary sense, but we make use of this well-known feature of sectarianism to illustrate the action of anti-evangelical principles, represented by this interchange of civilities amongst the dwellers upon the earth.

‘Because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt upon the earth,’—that is, while they were alive; when, although prophesying (or interpreting) in sackcloth, the spiritual sense gave a certain degree of life to the literal interpretation. Accompanied with the spiritual sense, the exhibitions of these two covenants, or testaments, *tortured* or tried the principles of the earthly or self-righteous system; the word rendered *tormented* being taken, as in other cases, from a term applied to the assay of metals, (§ 210.) This reason of rejoicing we have perhaps already sufficiently

enlarged upon. These dwellers upon the earth,\*—principles dependent upon the earthly system—had been tested and tried by the prophesying of the two witnesses even in sackcloth. So we suppose the exhibition of the old and new dispensations even partially in a spiritual sense, or, in that sense under the disadvantage of a legal construction, to be of a nature to put to the test the elements or principles of a self-righteous theory. Entirely divested of this sense they have no longer this action, although susceptible of reassuming it as soon as their language is accompanied with its proper interpretation.

Vs. 11, 12. And after three days and a half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven, saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

Καὶ μετὰ τὰς τρεῖς ἡμέρας καὶ ἡμισυ πνεῦμα ζωῆς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσῆλθεν ἐν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἔστησαν ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας αὐτῶν· καὶ φόβος μέγας ἐπέπεσεν ἐπὶ τοὺς θεωροῦντας αὐτούς. Καὶ ἤκουσαν φωνὴν μεγάλην ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ λέγουσαν αὐτοῖς· ἀνάβητε ὧδε· καὶ ἀνέβησαν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ, καὶ ἐθεώρησαν αὐτοὺς οἱ ἐχθροὶ αὐτῶν.

§ 253. “And after three days and a half,” &c.—When the outer court is no longer in possession of the Gentiles; when the city is no longer trodden by them; when there is no longer any prophesying in sackcloth, then, as we apprehend, simultaneously the two witnesses are resuscitated. The spirit gives life to the body—the spiritual sense again accompanies the literal—the three figures are nearly equivalents, or perhaps the return of the spirit of life from God into the bodies of the witnesses, may be viewed as the instrument of liberating the outer court and the city; as well as of terminating the prophesying in sackcloth. As if we should say, the restoration of

\* They that dwell on the earth, οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. These are the *inhabitants of the earth*, against whom the three *voices* are uttered, Rev. viii. 13; they are also those said to be destined for trial, Rev. iii. 10; those upon whom the souls under the altar call for vengeance, Rev. vi. 10; those unto whom the devil (the accuser) is said to come down with great wrath, Rev. xii. 12; those represented as the worshippers of the beast, and under the influence of the false prophet, Rev. xiii. 8, 12, 14; those said to be drunk with the wine of the harlot, Rev. xvii. 2; and those wondering when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is, Rev. xvii. 8; and they are those (Rev. xi. 10) rejoicing over the death of the witnesses; at the same time they are those concerning (ἐπὶ) whom the everlasting gospel is preached by the angel flying through the mid-heaven, Rev. xiv. 6. The same term in the Greek being employed in all these passages, the collation of which confirms us in the opinion that the apocalyptic *earth* is the figure of a doctrinal system of human merits, and that these dwellers upon the earth are figures of principles or doctrinal elements dependent upon this system.

the spiritual understanding to the letter of revelation is the instrument of liberating that revelation from the misconception represented by the treading of the outer court, &c. ; liberating also the exhibition of the economy of redemption from the characteristic of bondage incident to a legal construction.

‘And great fear fell upon them that saw them.’—Fear, including the idea of amazement or astonishment, (Rob. Lex. 807 ; ) as on the occasion of the restoration of speech to Zacharias, it is said great fear fell on all that dwelt round about them ; so Daniel *was astonished for one hour*, (Daniel iv. 19,) after hearing the recital of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. An expression probably not to be taken strictly, but intended to give intensity to the impression created by the extraordinary character of the revelation made. So the great fear, here spoken of, is intended to place the extraordinary nature of the change in contemplation in a prominent point of view ; calling attention to the importance of the difference between the bodies without the spirit of life, and the bodies with that spirit : accordingly we do not find the witnesses after their resuscitation again prophesying in *sackcloth* ; on the contrary, their ascension appears to be almost simultaneous with their restoration to life.

‘And they heard a great voice from heaven, saying,’ &c.—This great voice we suppose to be something in the nature of the revelation made of the true character of the witnesses, causing them to appear in a new light, and placing their testimony beyond dispute.

‘Come up hither.’—That is, exhibit your truly spiritual character, something equivalent to the change in the state of mind, or views, experienced by the apostle when called *up* into heaven, (§ 117.) The change however in the circumstances of these witnesses, consists in the manifestation of the proper spiritual sense of their testimony.

‘And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them.’—That is, they were manifested amidst the clouds of types and symbols of revelation, (§ 18,) to be witnesses of Christ in a spiritual sense, and so manifested as to terminate all opposition to them, or to their testimony. “They stood upon their feet,”—they were manifested to possess the spirit of life : “They ascended up into heaven,”—they were manifested to be elements of the heavenly scheme ; or of the heavenly exhibition of the scheme of sovereign grace. They did not continue to prophesy on earth—there was no need of it—they had prophesied, they had finished their testimony. It is now shown that this testimony is of a spiritual character, and to be taken in a spiritual sense. With this key, we go back to the testimony already given, and by a spiritual construction ascertain its true meaning, which is all that is required. The witnesses now testify in heaven,—their testimony is the same as that before given on earth, except that it is now disencum-



bered of its earthly garb. "Their enemies beheld them,"—the effect of this sight upon the minds of the enemies is not stated; the inference is, that this exhibition was enough to render the testimony of the witnesses indisputable. The manifestation that truth is truth, being equally a manifestation that error is error. The great voice, the invitation to come up, and the ascension, we may consider three several evidences in favour of the testimony of these witnesses.

V. 13. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Καὶ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἐγένετο σεισμὸς μέγας, καὶ τὸ δέκατον τῆς πόλεως ἔπεσε, καὶ ἀπεκρίναντο ἐν τῷ σεισμῷ ὀνόματα ἀνθρώπων χιλιάδες ἑπτὰ, καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ ἔμφοβοι ἐγένοντο καὶ ἔδωκαν δόξαν τῷ Θεῷ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ.

§ 254. 'And the same hour,' &c.,—or, according to the Greek, in that very hour; that is, precisely at the moment. So John iv. 53, "The father knew therefore that it was in that very hour (ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ, precisely at the moment) when Jesus said, Thy son liveth, the fever left him."

'There was a great earthquake,' commotion, or shaking, (§ 164.) A commotion resulting no doubt from the testimony in favour of the witnesses, afforded by the exhibition of their ascension; as if it were said that the manifestation of the spiritual sense and meaning of the two covenants as revealed in the Scriptures gives a *shock*, as it were of an earthquake, to the earthly system of literal interpretation; and this simultaneously, or nearly so, as the action of cause and effect: one thing growing out of the other, or one change of views involving another.

'And the tenth part of the city fell.'—The word *part* is not in the original, and is better omitted, as it tends unnecessarily to materialize our association of ideas. The ascension of the witnesses occasions a shock, felt apparently by the whole city, but only a tenth or *tithe* of it is overturned or destroyed. The tenth or tithe under the Levitical dispensation was the portion of the produce of the land appropriated especially to the temple service. The city must be that spoken of in the eighth verse—the *great* city—the anti-evangelical scheme of salvation, the opposite of the scheme represented by the heavenly Jerusalem. Of course the tithe of the city we suppose to be that portion of this false system, the principles of which pertain especially to the worship of God. It is not said that this *great* city had a temple. The temple of God in Babylon is nowhere spoken of in the Scriptures. But we may imagine a country where the system of *tithing* is carried to its fullest extent, under the pretext of providing for the worship of God, when in fact the avails of the system are applied exclusively to the service and glorification of man; where, although there is a *tenth* thus set

apart, there is strictly no temple of God. Such a country would be a type or symbol of the self-righteous system represented by the city. The system has amidst its elements certain principles of divine worship—principles purporting a zeal for the honour and glory of God; although, in effect, on these principles the disciple is as far out of the *position* requisite for the worship of the true God, as was the deluded Babylonian when sacrificing in the temple of Belus. So we find apparently most zeal displayed for the temple service at Jerusalem, when the house of God was made a house of merchandise.

The exhibition of the spiritual sense of revelation, accompanied with indisputable evidence of its correctness, must be followed, in the nature of the case, by a demolition of the false views of divine service, forming the temple portion of the anti-evangelical system, or great city. The demolition of this portion of the city we suppose to be represented by the falling of its *tenth*—its hypocritical tenth—just that part of the system most the subject of divine abhorrence, and therefore the first to be overthrown; mercenary, self-righteous, and vainglorious principles of worship or service, being farthest from those in which the Deity delights. As it is said, Is. lxvi. 3, “He that killed an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb as if he cut off a dog’s neck;” and Is. i. 11–13, “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord?” . . . “Bring no more vain oblations: incense is an abomination unto me; the new-moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; (it is) iniquity, even the solemn meeting.”

§ 255. ‘And in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand,’—or verbatim, according to the Greek, *and were killed\* in the shaking names of men thousands seven*. This introduction of the word *names* is sometimes supposed to be merely a periphrasis for the persons, &c.; and is said to be also common in the Hebrew, (Rob. Lex. 505.) Here, however, we apprehend it has a peculiar signification. A man’s name is that upon which he values himself—his reputation, his glory—as the builders of the tower of Babel went about to procure for themselves a *name*; so we suppose these *names* to represent certain vainglorious principles: perhaps those peculiar to the temple system, or rather the *tithing* system of the great city. As in the time of the prophet Elijah (1 Kings xix. 18) God had reserved to himself seven thousand men which had not bowed the knee to the image of Baal, so these seven thousand names of men killed represent something of an opposite character; as of those which had devoted themselves in the great city to Baal service. We do not suppose *seven thousand* here in-

\* We adopt the word *killed* instead of *slain*, because the Greek term expressing it is not that elsewhere employed to express *slaying* or *slaughtering*, as of a victim to be sacrificed.

tended to indicate an exact number ; decimals representing an indefinite multitude in proportion to the subject under consideration, as thousands, hundreds, tens, &c. ; and the number *seven* representing the totality of a select class. As, in one case, seven thousand were selected to be saved ; so, in the other, the like number are selected to be destroyed ; that is, *all* the false principles peculiar to the false and pretended system of worship of the *great city*.

‘The remainder were affrighted,’ &c.—It was a common effect of the miracles performed by Jesus Christ, that the spectators marvelled, or were astonished, and glorified God. So on occasion of raising the widow’s son, “there came,” it is said, “great fear on all ; and they glorified God ;” but it does not appear that they were converted to the faith in Christ by this emotion. When the lame man was healed at the gate of the temple, through the instrumentality of Peter and John, as they openly declared, *by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth*, all the people glorified God for that which was done. When Jesus gave sight to him that was born blind, the Pharisees, no longer able to dispute the fact, urged that the praise of the cure should be given to God, (John ix. 24.) To glorify, or ascribe praise to God, is thus set forth in Scripture as something distinct from belief in Christ. The Pharisees could not be brought to glorify God *in Christ*. So we suppose these affrighted *remaining ones* (οἱ λοιποί) to represent principles capable of an ascription of glory to God, or professedly adoring Him, but affecting to do this irrespective of his manifestation of himself *in Christ*.

When, on account of their iniquities and idolatries, the inhabitants of Jerusalem were given into the power of the enemy, 2 Kings xxiv. 16, and the king of Babylon carried away all the *men of might*, (seven thousand,) the remainder no doubt were affrighted, but they were not converted ; on the contrary, those left (οἱ λοιποί) merged themselves so much further into idolatry, that they could scarcely be recognized as the same people at the time of the restoration. They acknowledged a Supreme Being, but they amalgamated with this acknowledgment a superstitious veneration for all the objects of worship of the heathen around them. So we may suppose those remaining in the apocalyptic great city, after the killing of the seven thousand, to represent principles ostensibly ascribing glory to God, but withholding, by a certain amalgamation of truth with error, the glory due to God, as in Christ reconciling the world to himself.\*

\* These *remaining ones* of the city probably correspond with those of Rev. ix. 20, rendered the rest of men ; perhaps the same too as those slain with the sword, Rev. xix. 21, and those termed “the rest of the dead,” Rev. xx. 5 ; opposites of the *remaining ones* of the woman’s seed, Rev. xii. 17. The Greek appellation, οἱ λοιποί, being the same in all these passages.



V. 11. The second wo is past; (and) behold, the third wo cometh quickly. Ἡ οὐὰ ἡ δευτέρα ἀπῆλθεν· ἰδοὺ, ἡ οὐὰ ἡ τρίτη ἔρχεται ταχύ.

§ 256. 'The second wo is past.' This verse would be a proper ending of the chapter, as it appears intended to prepare the mind of the reader for something of extraordinary importance yet to come, while it affords an opportunity of reviewing the past, in order that we may form some definite idea of the nature of these woes, and in what they consist.

## R E T R O S P E C T .

As we have remarked at the close of section 226, the account given of the Euphratean horsemen compasses the whole action of the *Second Wo*—the prophesying of the witnesses, &c., being not an additional part of the wo, but a different figure or series of figures of the same *wo*.

All three of these woes we must recollect are pronounced against the *dwellers upon the earth*; a figure the opposite of that represented by the saints, (holy ones,) and by the souls under the altar; and a figure apparently of certain elements amidst which the sealed ones are exceptions. These inhabitants of the earth we suppose to be principles of the earthly system, (vid. § 252, note,) subjected by the woes to peculiar trials or tests, calculated to exhibit their fallacy and inconsistency with God's plan of salvation.

The war of the scorpio-locusts was a contest, according to our views, not between infidels and Christians, nor between wicked men and pious men; but between the principles of the abyss, or bottomless pit system, and the fallacious principles of what we term the earthly system; these latter being designated as the men not having the seal of God in their foreheads, Rev. ix. 4. These principles are *tortured*—put to the rack—showing their subjection to the power of the elements of the abyss. This ordeal of the first wo exhibits the insufficiency of the earthly system to cope with one of its own necessary effects or results. An idea illustrated by the emanation of a cloud of insects naturally destructive to vegetation, but otherwise harmless, rising from an immense shaft, as of a well without a bottom sunk in the earth—to these insects a sting being given which under the direction of the *Destroyer* contrary to their nature turns their hostile action against the human species. The tormentors come from the earth, or earthly system. The sting (the sting of death, sin) is subsequently given; and the subjects upon which they act are dwellers on the earth, or dependents upon the earthly system.

This *abyss* system supposes man to stand upon his own merits; it does not even contemplate the necessity of a propitiation. Its principles at first, like *smoke*, act only in keeping out of sight the *light*, (divine right-

cousness;) subsequently they exhibit their natural character, that of destroying all human claims to righteousness; and as this character is further developed they show their tendency to carry into effect the action of the law; the necessity of establishing a righteousness under the law evolving legal principles, by which all pretensions to such righteousness must be tried. These legal principles appear at first in a modified, harmless shape, or comparatively so—the law being brought down to a human standard. The subject is not affected because its claims do not appear to meet his case; or if they do, the consequences of what he esteems his imperfections are not esteemed important. The principle of unmitigated justice being carried out, the law asserts its rights. *He that offends in one point is guilty of all*; (James ii. 10.) The locust now possesses the scorpion's sting—the sinner is convinced not only of a destitution of righteousness, but also of absolute transgression—not only negatively unworthy of reward, but positively deserving of punishment. Conscious of guilt, he now desires annihilation, if it were possible—*men seek death, but cannot find it*. Still the necessity of an atonement is not yet developed.

Thus far self-justification only is exhibited as hopeless. The next futile attempt is that of providing an atonement by earthly or human means of propitiation. Here the Second Wo proceeds to try the fallacy of such pretensions, under the figure of the action of a great earthly river—an object of human vainglorious reliance, but in effect a more severe instrument of torture, or trial, than the preceding.

The action of the elements, doctrinal messengers (angels) of the Euphratean system of atonement, as soon as let loose, or developed, results in the exhibition of an overwhelming multitude of principles, proving to be not only instruments of torture, but absolutely of death, or destruction to the elements of the earthly system. As we may suppose the case of a disciple, who being driven from the hope of justifying himself, falls back upon the hope of *atonement* for himself, as the only remaining means of eternal life. If this hope also be taken away there is left for him no prospect but that of *death*—eternal death. So these emanations from the great river Euphrates, *kill* by the fire, by the smoke, and by the sulphur, from their mouths; that is, by the revelation, or development, of their true character; as any *sufficient* atonement for himself, to be wrought out by the sinner, must result in the exaction of his eternal punishment—his utter destruction. And as we sometimes say of a murderer about to be executed, that he must atone by undergoing this capital punishment for the crime he has committed,—his atonement (even to human law) does not save his life, but absolutely costs the whole of it. So the claims of divine justice can be satisfied with nothing less than the eternal death of the sinner; a truth apparently typified by the rule of the legal dispensation, adopted and acted upon almost by the

common consent of mankind, "Whosoever sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." And this even when the blood has been innocently shed, as in the case of the man-slayer, for whom there was no safety but in a city of refuge.

§ 257. While the locusts from the abyss and the horsemen from the Euphrates are thus showing the condemned and hopeless condition of the sinner—destitute of merit, and absolutely obnoxious to the wrath of God, the two witnesses of Jesus are testifying of him—testifying however as in sackcloth, under the disadvantage of a legal construction—and finally, under this disadvantage, are overcome by the principle of *self*, (as we assume it for the present to be,) emanating from the bottomless system—at the same time the external or ordinary sense of the portion of divine revelation pertaining to the worship of God, (the court,) as well as of the portion pertaining to the means of salvation, (the city,) is under the control of *Gentile* misconstruction—shackled and fettered by a self-righteous and legal spirit of interpretation. The prophesying of the two witnesses however, although under the disadvantage named, co-operates in carrying into effect the *second* wo; showing, at least, the inability of man to atone for himself; as we may imagine revealed truth to be so set forth, by human preaching, as to exhibit only the sinner's desperate condition, without distinctly pointing out to him his only refuge—the true way of salvation.

Simultaneously also, days months and years being all apocalyptically equivalent figures, these two witnesses may appear in two different lights, when contemplated in different positions. Out of the Sodomitish Egyptian city of the crucifixion, these witnesses or elements prophesy the truth, but they do it in sackcloth, or under a misconstruction. In the city, or in this system, they are in effect a mere dead letter—their testimony does not even go to convince the sinner of his need of redemption. He is not tormented or tried by the contemplation even of the elements of divine justice. So one who receives the Scriptures in their literal sense only, and in a very accommodating sense too, having convinced himself that they contain nothing solemnly important, *rejoices over their dead bodies*,\* as no longer capable of occasioning an uneasiness of conscience. This anti-evangelical city may be thus supposed to represent a refinement of the earthly system, in which the two witnesses (the old and new dispensations) are mere dead bodies; while out of this system, in a position where there is a greater prevalence of

\* The spectators, termed *they of the people* Rev. xi. 9. *ἐκ τῶν λαῶν*, κ.τ.λ. apparently opposites of those rejoicing over the dead bodies, are not supposed to represent the aggregate of all people, nations, &c.; but, as the preposition *ἐκ* implies, they constitute a body chosen or taken out from among the nations, kindreds, &c.: as Acts xv. 14, "Simon hath declared how GOD at the first did visit the Gentiles, (nations,) to take out of them a people for his name,"—*λαβεῖν ἐκ ἐθνῶν λαόν*, κ.τ.λ.



truth, although of truth amalgamated with error, they are living witnesses, but in sackcloth. In both cases, however, the same change brings a remedy for both evils. The restoration of the spiritual sense to the elements of revelation in the city, is followed immediately by the manifestation of their entire spirituality ; and subsequently to this manifestation they can no longer prophesy in sackcloth, either in or out of the city ; while the same manifestation shows the inconsistency of the city system with the true worship of God. Here, however, the development of the second *wo* stops—the temple of God, or true medium of worship, is not yet exhibited, nor is the Holy City, the true means of salvation, yet represented. For a sight of these we must prepare ourselves under the exhibition of the third *wo*—not that this exhibition is a *wo* to *man*, but that it is a *wo* to the false principles of worship, and to the principles of the false means of salvation, represented as dwellers upon the earth. The exhibition of truth bring a *wo* to the elements of falsehood, as the delusion and exposure of that which is false is the triumph or exhibition of the victory of truth—and especially, we may add, of revealed truth.

CHAPTER XI.—(*Continued.*)

## SEVENTH OR THIRD WO TRUMPET.

## CHORUS OF ELDERS AND HEAVENLY VOICES.

V. 15. And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become (the kingdoms) of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

Καὶ ὁ ἑβδόμος ἄγγελος ἐσάλπισε, καὶ ἐγένοντο φωναὶ μεγάλαι ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, λέγοντες· ἐγένετο ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ κόσμου τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ, καὶ βασιλεύσει εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

§ 258. ‘And the seventh angel sounded.’—This is commonly called the last *wo trumpet*, but we are not to expect an exhibition of the *wo* immediately upon the sounding of the trumpet. It is something to appear in the course of that sounding, or it may be that the development or revelation of the trumpet, taken altogether as a whole, constitutes the *wo*. “Behold the third *wo*,” it was said in the last verse, “cometh *quickly*,” but this *quickly* we suppose is not to be applied in a literal sense to *time*. The *wo* is to come suddenly, and the revelation has now reached that stage when it is just about being made. In the relation to be given, however, there may be some preliminary matter to be attended to first.

‘And there were great voices in heaven.’—The apostle still retains his heavenly position, and is consequently a witness to the exultation prevailing there, in anticipation of the manifestation of truth now about being made. These voices in heaven perform the part of a *chorus*, their acclamations indicating the character of the scenes to follow. This verse, together with the remainder of the chapter, as far as the 18th verse, giving the description of a *prelude* to the change of scene, commencing at the 19th verse. During the exhibition of the scorpion-locusts of the Euphratean horsemen, and of the witnesses, the apostle’s attention had been directed to the contemplation of earthly objects; he is now to be the spectator for a season, as we find from the next chapter, of heavenly things; as if privileged with an insight to a certain degree into the counsels of the Most High; and for this exhibition the *prelude* under consideration is to prepare him.

‘The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and

of his Christ, '(or of his anointed;) 'and he shall reign for ever and ever.'—This we may consider the announcement of the subject to be revealed by the voice of this trumpet; the unfolding of *the mystery of God as declared to the prophets* is now to be completed, (Rev. x. 7;) it is to be manifested that the kingdoms of the world are subordinate to that of Christ. The various systems of salvation of human invention are all to be exhibited as in subjection to that one system, or economy, of which Christ is the chief, or rather of which God in Christ is the chief; the announcement being equivalent to the description of the coming of the end, 1 Cor. xv. 24–28; which as a matter *in futuro* applies, as we have before observed, to the manifestation of the fact, and not to the existence itself of the fact. The exulting language of these voices reminds us that the exhibition spoken of as a *vo* to the inhabitants of the earth is equally represented as a cause of rejoicing to the dwellers in heaven.

§ 259. A kingdom is that system, economy, or state of things, in which there is a sovereignty, or rule, of one chief over a class subject to that sovereignty; this state of subjection implying in the subject a state of dependence upon the chief; and in the chief, a right or power of ownership, in respect to the subject. Such were the monarchies of ancient times; and such are some of them still in eastern countries.

The kingdom of God is that state of things in which God is the sovereign and man the subject; in which man's dependence upon God is entire, and God's ownership of man complete. A being independent of the sovereign is no longer a subject;—if man be in any way independent of God, he cannot be a subject of God. If man, therefore, were independent of God for his eternal salvation, he could not be a subject of the kingdom of God. Man, having any rights over which God has no control, could not be entitled the creature or property of God;—man having any right of his own to eternal life could not, so far, be the property of God. The essential principle then of the kingdom of God is, that man is entirely dependent upon God for all things, either for time or for eternity;—that man has no right or claim of his own, nor can have such in any way, either to this life or to that which is to come. God has a right to do with his creatures, or with his property, as he pleases; his right of ownership is as perfect in respect to rational beings as in respect to irrational;—as perfect with regard to matters of the soul, or mind, as with regard to those of body, or of material substances. Nor could this be otherwise; for if man were independent of God in any way, in that way he would be under no obligation to serve him. If man had a right to eternal life, or could establish that right by any merit or claim of his own, he would have no call for gratitude even for that greatest possible good. If he were saved by his own merits, or by any



work of his own, and not entirely by the free unmerited favour of God himself, he would not be bound in gratitude to serve God, even for his salvation : hence the necessity of salvation through grace—*sovereign grace*—to place man in the position of a subject of God.

The kingdom of Christ is of the same character ; and Christ being God manifest in the flesh, the two kingdoms are in effect the same. Apparently in order to accommodate the mystery of redemption to the understanding of man, the whole praise and glory of our salvation is represented as being due to Christ the Son of God, in the first instance ;—subsequently the veil of this sonship is lifted, and we find the real Benefactor, Redeemer, and Saviour, to be God himself, who has in the person of his Son wrought out for us this salvation. It is then, as the apostle says in the passage just now quoted, that the *end cometh* : when the Son gives up the kingdom unto the Father ; when the obligation of the redeemed to his Redeemer is transferred from the representative of God to God himself,—from the express image of the Father to the Father immediately ; that is, the *manifestation* is thus changed. There is no change in the fact ; God was in Christ, and God is and has been all in all, throughout eternity. With this also the kingdom of heaven must correspond ; heaven being, as we have supposed, a figurative appellation of the divine plan of government, as revealed to us in the gospel, showing forth the wondrous works of sovereign grace. This kingdom, like the two others, involves the principle of God's sovereignty and ownership, on the one hand ; and on the other, that of man's subjection and entire dependence.

Opposite to this heavenly kingdom, or system, are the kingdoms of the world ; worldly systems, involving principles of man's supposed independence of God ; setting forth the human subject as dependent upon some merit or action, or conduct of his own, for his eternal well-being ; as if man were indebted to himself for his own redemption,—indebted to himself, or to some earthly object, even for his escape from the wrath to come, and for his enjoyment of eternal bliss ! Systems of this character are apparently what are called kingdoms of the world ; these are to undergo a certain transmutation ; their principles are to be changed, or their elements are to be manifested to be subservient to the kingdom of God.

Some copies of the Greek have this term kingdom in the singular, as that from which we copy. This renders the change more particularly applicable to the earthly kingdom as a whole ; that in which the *inhabitants of the earth* find their safety. This kingdom is made to give up its pretensions, being superseded by the kingdom of God ;—the difference, however, cannot be material, the general feature of the worldly system in one case being represented by a single earthly kingdom ; in the other, various systems, with the same general feature, being spoken of as the several kingdoms of

the earth. The main subject of gratulation is the change wrought in these systems. When the truth is fully manifested, erroneous principles will be taken away, and true principles substituted in their place; and this in such a manner as that one Lord and his Christ, God and the Lamb, or God alone—one and the same being—is manifested to occupy the position of complete sovereignty.

Vs. 16, 17. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats [thrones], fell upon their faces and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

Καὶ οἱ εἰκοσιτέσσαρες· πρεσβύτεροι, οἱ ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ καθήμενοι ἐπὶ τοὺς θρόνους αὐτῶν, ἔπεσαν ἐπὶ τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτῶν καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ Θεῷ, λέγοντες· εὐχαριστοῦμέν σοι, κύριε ὁ Θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν, ὅτι εἰληφας τὴν δύναμιν σου τὴν μεγάλην καὶ ἐβασίλευσας.

§ 260. ‘And the four and twenty elders,’ &c.—The elements supposed to be represented by these elders have been already noticed; this being the fourth description given of their falling down and worshipping: viz., previous to the opening of the seventh seal, and immediately after the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand; immediately after the taking of the sealed book by the Lamb; and immediately before the opening of the seals, and on the occasion of the first exhibition of Divine Majesty. On all these occasions this action of prostration seems to be intended to direct the attention to something about to be manifested. This is the more to be inferred as there is no account after the sounding of this last trumpet of any further prostration. There is nothing said of it at the close of the Apocalypse; as if the revelation having been now gone through, this kind of notice was no more necessary. This thank-offering of the elders, with the reason given for it, appears intended to direct us to seek that reason in what is afterwards to be revealed.

‘We give thee thanks, because thou hast taken unto thee thy great power, and hast reigned.’—We are to see, in what is to be revealed, how it is that God has taken to himself his great power, and has reigned.

It is not to be supposed that the Supreme Being had ever actually laid aside his power, and afterwards resumed it;—this could not be: but for a certain time he had not permitted it to appear *on earth* that the power of salvation was in himself alone. This we may suppose to have been the case during the prophesying of the witnesses in *sackcloth*, and while their *dead bodies* remained in the street of the great city; while the Holy City was trodden by the Gentiles, and the outer court of the temple was in their possession. While these things, or whenever these things exist, the “great power” of God does not appear, and his reign is not manifest. Now, however, the truth is, or is about to be, exhibited; the language of

these twenty-four elders corresponding with that of the Psalmist, "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty ride prosperously; because of truth and meekness and righteousness, (Ps. xlv. 3, 4.) The twenty-four elders must be presumed to be cognizant of the fact of God's always having possessed the power and rule, but they rejoice that the time has come when this fact is to be manifested.

V. 18. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

Καὶ τὰ ἔθνη ὀργίσθησαν, καὶ ἦλθεν ἡ ὀργή σου καὶ ὁ καιρὸς τῶν νεκρῶν, κριθῆναι καὶ δοῦναι τὸν μισθὸν τοῖς δούλοις σου, τοῖς προφήταις καὶ τοῖς ἁγίοις καὶ τοῖς φοβουμένοις τὸ ὄνομά σου, τοῖς μικροῖς καὶ τοῖς μεγάλοις, καὶ διαφθεῖραι τοὺς διαφθείροντας τὴν γῆν.

§ 261. 'And the nations were angry,' &c.—This verse should be read immediately in connection with the preceding, as it is part of the language of the twenty-four elders, and pertains also in anticipation to the subject of the present (seventh) trumpet. The term rendered *nations*, τὰ ἔθνη, is the same as that rendered elsewhere *Gentiles*, and sometimes *the heathen*. The terms rendered *angry* and *wrath*, being both from the same Greek root,\* would have been better translated *raged* and *rage*; as, the nations *raged* and thy *rage* is come: as if it had been said, The nations have been angry, but now thine anger is come; or, the heathen *raged*, and now thy *rage* is come; the feebleness of this earthly wrath being contrasted with the terrible might of divine wrath, corresponding with Ps. ii. 1, 2, 5, "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the LORD shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure." This passage is applied, Acts iv. 25, in a primary sense, to the opposition made to Jesus Christ and his apostles, by both Jewish and Roman rulers in Jerusalem; but it is evident that it must have a more extended and spiritual sense, of which this first opposition may be considered a type. So also Ps. xlv. 6, "The heathen *raged*, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted."

The outer court of the temple was given unto the Gentiles, and they were to tread the holy city under foot forty-two months. We cannot sup-

\* The Greek verb ὀργίζω, rendered *angry*, comes from a root signifying great excitement; ὀργή, *impetus*, whence the Bacchanalian term *orgies*. This anger may not be merely the anger of disappointment; it may be the rage of those in power as well as of those who lose their power. The nations madly *raged* while in power, and in this state were met by the wrath of God.



pose them to have been angry at this. They were angry with the prophesying of the witnesses, because of the torment or torture of this prophecy, but again they rejoiced when the spirit was separated from the body of the two prophets; and accordingly we may presume, that when the witnesses again stood upon their feet their prophesying caused the same kind of torture as it did before, and probably in a much greater degree, especially from its effects in the falling of the tenth of the city, and the slaying of the seven thousand names of men. This then we may presume to be the period when the nations or Gentiles were angry, being the same moment as that in which the wrath of God is manifested. Figuratively speaking, the divine wrath against false principles is exhibited simultaneously with the exercise of the wrath or opposition of these false principles against those that are true; the Gentiles, they that dwell upon the earth—the men of the city, and the nations—all representing in this chapter the elements of legal and self-righteous systems arrayed against the principles of salvation by grace. A crisis is now alluded to, when the opposition on the one part is met by the wrath of the Most High on the other—a wrath, however, as we have before suggested, not against the errorist, but against the error. The dwellers upon the earth or the men of the earth, in a literal sense, are sinners; but it was for them that Christ died: “While we were yet *sinners* Christ died for us,” Rom. v. 5. The object of divine wrath, therefore, we may presume is not here the *sinner*, or man as a sinful being, but those principles which prevent the sinner from availing himself of the mercy of God—at least we suppose such to be the case, in this apocalyptic exhibition. The collision here is between a system or systems of pretended human merits, and the exactions of divine justice; as, if exemplified in man himself, the contest would be between the individual, who trusted in his own righteousness, and the requisition of the law. This unequal contest is now, we may suppose, represented as about to terminate: as it is said, Ps. xlv. 10, “Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.”

§ 262. ‘And the time of the dead, that they should be judged.’—We find a judgment corresponding with this spoken of Rev. xx. 12, when the dead, small and great, are seen to stand before God: this suggests to us that the matters spoken of in this declaration are equally to be found in the figures of the subsequent exhibition; this *prefatory overture* of the twenty-four elders enumerating the several heads of the coming representation: the anger of the nations, the wrath of God, the time of the dead, the time of rewarding the servants, &c., and the time of destroying those that destroy the earth.

We shall have occasion to advert hereafter to what we suppose is to be understood by *the dead* here: meantime we only suggest that it is something

corresponding with *dead works*—something divested of the spirit of life—principles bringing forth no fruit acceptable to God—mercenary and selfish principles, upon which God cannot be served in the strict sense of the term. These are to be judged, and the folly of their pretensions manifested; as it is said, Heb. vi. 1, “Therefore leaving the [*elementary*] principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from *dead works* ;” and ix. 14, “How much more shall the blood of Christ \* \* \* \* purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” It being necessary to purge away these mercenary elements, before God can be served in spirit and in truth.

‘And that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints [holy ones], and to those fearing thy name.’—Here are three several classes of servants, representing we suppose three classes of elements of truth. The subjects of salvation, in a *literal* sense, receive the reward of the inheritance, (Col. iii. 24,) and this inheritance is that of the merits of their Redeemer. They receive the reward of his merit, not of their own. Literally, even the prophets and best of men, when they have done all, can only say, We are unprofitable servants, we have done only that which it was our duty to do. But in the apocalyptic sense, we suppose these *servants* to be elements of truth—principles of the economy of salvation, which really and directly serve God and promote his glory. The reward to be given to these principles is the manifestation of their truth—the *crown of gold* ; and the manifestation of their belonging to the economy of grace—the *white robe* ; and the manifestation of their victory over the elements of the law—the *palms in their hands*.

§ 263. ‘And shouldest destroy [or cause to corrupt] those that destroy [or corrupt] the earth.’—This we may presume to refer to the destruction of the harlot Babylon, of the beast, of the false prophet, and of death and hell, as about to be set forth in the subsequent chapters—corrupt principles corrupting the earthly system, and in effect destroying it—for we may presume that it is in consequence of this destruction that a *new earth*, as well as a new heaven, is said to be seen, Rev. xxi. 1 ; the difference between the old earth and the new earth, corresponding perhaps with the difference between the old Jerusalem and the new Jerusalem. False systems of self-righteousness, however plausible, being the means of rendering the earthly system a mass of corruption—as a dead body in a state of putrefaction exhibits in the strongest manner its entire want of the spirit of life. These systems, like corrupt trees, being incapable of bringing forth good fruit, must be themselves destroyed ; which destruction is accomplished by exhibiting them in their proper characters—exposing them to the action of the revealed word of God—bringing them so into contact with that word that, like chaff, they are consumed as by the fire of a furnace, Matt. vii. 17–19 ; Luke vi. 43,

44. So the power of falsehood is destroyed when it is manifested to be falsehood ; as it is said, 2 Peter ii. 12, “They shall utterly perish in their own corruption,” ἐν τῇ φθορᾷ αὐτῶν καταφθαγέσονται, *shall be utterly corrupted in their own corruption.*

With the close of this verse the chapter should end ; the action of the *chorus*, consisting of the voices in heaven and of the responsive voices of the elders, constituting an intermediate scene, the description of which commences with the fifteenth verse and terminates here.



CHAPTER XI.—(*Continued.*)

## SEVENTH TRUMPET.—THIRD WO.

## THE TEMPLE OPENED IN HEAVEN.

V. 19. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

Καὶ ἡροίγη ὁ ναὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, καὶ ὤφθη ἡ κιβωτὸς τῆς διαθήκης αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ ναῷ αὐτοῦ· καὶ ἐγένοντο ἄστραπαὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ βρονταὶ καὶ σεισμός καὶ χάλαζα μέγλη.

§ 264. ‘And the temple of God was opened in heaven.’—“One thing have I desired of the Lord,” says David, “that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple,” (Ps. xxvii. 4.) Something like this privilege appears to be now enjoyed by the Apostle—an opportunity of inquiring into the mysteries of the temple—for although it is not expressed, the natural inference must be that the exhibition subsequently made, as described in the next chapter, is a result of this opening of the temple—a temple in heaven, not on the earth—something entirely of a spiritual character; a system, as we suppose, of principles peculiar to that position necessary to enable the worshipper of GOD to worship him in spirit and in truth.

We have just witnessed the demolition of the *tithing* system of the anti-evangelical city; those pretended elements of worship which served as a substitute for a temple. Our attention is now directed to the true temple—the opposite of this substitute—a temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens—there is said to be no temple in the New Jerusalem, (Rev. xxi. 22.) because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. That is, there is no other than this; and this we suppose to be the temple now seen in heaven. An arrangement of those principles of eternal truth by which God himself, as manifested in Christ, appears in the light of his own temple. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself; and in Christ (God manifest in the flesh) the disciple finds an access unto God, by which he is enabled to worship Him acceptably.

‘And there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament,’—or the

ark of his covenant, as the word translated *testament* here is rendered, Gal. iv. 24, (ἡ κιβωτὸς τῆς διαθήκης αὐτοῦ,) or the ark of the testimony, as it is sometimes called in the Old Testament.\* The ark was not the testament itself, but that which contained the testament, or covenant. The ark is seen, but the testament within the ark is not yet exhibited. That this exhibition is about to take place, seems however to be implied. The opening of the temple, then, and display of the ark, are equivalent to certain preparations requisite for the representations or developments about to be made.

The ark of Noah we suppose to be a symbol of Christ as a means of preservation for all taking refuge in it. The ark of the testament we suppose also to be a type of Christ, as that in which all the elements or mysteries of the economy of salvation are contained; or as Him in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, (Col. ii. 3.) To see the ark was to see that which contained these treasures; but the treasures themselves yet remain to be exhibited.

§ 265. ‘And there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an

\* The term *διαθήκη* occurs thirty-three times in the New Testament, being twelve times rendered in our common version by the word *testament*, and twenty-one times by that of *covenant*. In the ninth chapter of Hebrews, the same term is rendered twice *covenant*, and five times *testament*. In these remarks we employ the term *testament*, *covenant*, *dispensation*, *economy*, *arrangement* or *disposition*, indiscriminately for this Greek term *diatheke*; but in using the word *covenant* we would not have the idea associated with it of a compact between two equal parties, mutually binding themselves to some engagement, which they might either of them decline entering into if so disposed. There can be no such *compact* between God and man. There is no equality of parties here; neither is there room here for voluntary action on the part of man. Man has not the right, or power, or liberty, to refuse to do or to agree to do any thing required of him by his God; he can engage to do nothing which it was not previously his duty to do. Here, therefore, only one of the parties is at liberty, and has the power and the right to promise or not to promise; to give or to withhold. It is the part of God to agree to *give* if he please, and to prescribe the way in which he will give; but it is not for man to stipulate, or to enter into a contract with the Deity.

Such being the peculiarity of relationship between the Creator and the creature, we must either understand by the English word *covenant*, when used as here contemplated, an agreement of one party only; or we must render the Greek term *diatheke* by *testament*, *dispensation*, *economy*, *arrangement*, &c.; in Latin, *dispositio*, according to *Trommius*—that is, the disposition which a testator makes of his property by will, for the benefit of his heirs. The testator having a perfect right to give his estate by will to whom he pleases, and to give it conditionally, or freely, as he may see fit; as also to annul his testament at any time and to substitute another in its place; whereas a covenant in the nature of a contract cannot be annulled without the consent of both parties. We accordingly substitute for the term *covenant*, on some occasions, the word *economy*, although this term expresses rather the state of things consequent to the disposition of the testament than the testament itself. The term *διαθήκη* occurs but in this one place in the Apocalypse, although the thing itself is necessarily a principal subject of the book.

earthquake, and great hail.'—These are legal indications, and the ark of the testament is known to have contained the two tables of the law. So the first sight of it may be said very naturally to call up the recollection of all the denunciations of Mount Sinai. According to 1 Kings viii. 9, this ark, too, was to contain nothing else than the two tables of the law; but this we may look upon as a prescription of the old dispensation rigidly carried out. According to Heb. ix. 3, 4, the ark of the testament contained also the pot of manna, and the rod of Aaron that budded, thus representing him in whom the provisions of both covenants are fulfilled. If therefore the first sight of the ark be attended with these terrific denunciations only, it is because these two representations of divine mercy are not yet perceived; and the ark is supposed to contain only the testimony of legal requisition: as if Christ were contemplated in no other light than as a law-giver and judge, and as such to be approached only with fearful apprehension.

Apocalyptically, however, we presume this judicial array of *lightnings*, &c., to be directed against elements of doctrine opposed to truth. They are intimations of the power of the truth about to be developed: as it is said, Ps. lxxvii. 18, "His lightnings enlighten the world;" and Is. xxviii. 17, "The hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies." The earthquake, or rather *shaking* or commotion, (*σεισμός*;) indicating the approaching shaking of systems of error, and the voices and thunderings the powerful character of revealed truth, when fully developed.

This temple of God must be the same as that mentioned in the first verse of the chapter, which the apostle was called upon to measure; the difference being in the circumstances in which it is seen. On earth, under an earthly construction, the temple is apparently *shut*—a foreign power having possession of its court—while in heaven, under a spiritual construction, it is *opened*; the veil is withdrawn, and its mysteries are capable of being revealed or laid open. The ark is seen, and perhaps too the manna or heavenly bread in the ark, or before the ark. This symbol of the righteousness of Christ being preserved with that of divine justice, (the books of the law,) as the tree of life was originally in Paradise with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The rod of Aaron which budded, showing the choice of the house of Levi for the priesthood, (Num. xvii. 8,) and pointing out the intercessorial character of our Great High Priest, (who, like Aaron amidst the plague, stands between the living and the dead,\*) may be supposed also to be seen in or near the ark.

In the literal temple the ark was placed in the inner recess, called the holiest of all, into which the High Priest alone entered once a year. Of

\* Between the *Living God* and those who are dead in trespasses and sin.



course, if the temple was so laid open that the ark was seen, the *holiest of all* must have been disclosed ; corresponding with the rending of the veil of the temple at the time of the crucifixion of our Saviour. This consummation of his work constituting in effect the development of the mysteries of the temple—showing the way into the holiest, or indicating the position by which the disciple obtains access unto GOD. If the ark of the testament be not elsewhere mentioned in the New Testament, it must be because we have its equivalent in Christ, as when the antitype makes its appearance the type is no longer required.

The apostle occupies the same position now that he did when first called up into heaven ; the scenery in the back-ground being the same ; but in front the exhibition of it is so far changed that a view of the opened temple is afforded, which was not before perceived ; while the apostle's attention, instead of being occupied with changes taking place on earth, as it must have been while taken up especially with what he saw of the two witnesses, is now directed altogether to appearances and transactions within the heavenly sphere of his observation.

## CHAPTER XII.

THE WOMAN.—THE MAN-CHILD.—THE DRAGON.—THE  
WAR IN HEAVEN.

Vs. 1, 2. And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; and she, being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

Καὶ σημεῖον μέγα ὤφθη ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ· γυνὴ περιβεβλημένη τὸν ἥλιον, καὶ ἡ σελήνη ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτῆς στέφανος ἀστέρων δώδεκα, καὶ ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα κρᾶζει, ὠδίνουσα καὶ βανίζομένη τεκεῖν.

§ 266. ‘AND there appeared,’ &c.—Notwithstanding the division of the chapters here, we consider, as already suggested, the subject of this chapter immediately connected with that of the last verse of the preceding. The development about to be made is a result of the opening of the temple, and of the sight of the ark of the covenant afforded by that opening. In other words, the unfolding of the elements of doctrine involved in that system of truth by which alone God can be truly worshipped, results in a development of certain principles peculiar to the economy of grace, represented by the contents of the ark, and elsewhere spoken of as “treasures of wisdom and knowledge hid in Christ.”

‘A great wonder,’ or rather, a great sign.—Not merely something exciting great astonishment, but something conveying a very important meaning. The word translated *wonder* in this place, repeatedly occurs in the New Testament; and with this exception is uniformly rendered by the term *sign*. It was applied amongst the Greeks to the marks of hours and half hours in the dial, to guide-posts and mile-stones, as well as to seals and military standards; always carrying a meaning with it. The verb *σημειόομαι*, from the same root, is applied to the action of taking notes or making remarks, either as a matter of record, or with the view of extending them afterwards: Vid. Suiceri Lex., art. *Σημειόω*. *Commentarium rerum scribo, ex quo posita fiat historia*. This great sign therefore we take to be something full of meaning; something corresponding perhaps with the prediction, Matt. xxiv. 30, “And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven.”

‘In heaven.’—The spiritual heaven we suppose to be the display of

divine government in spiritual things, analogous to the astronomical exhibition of divine power afforded by the natural heavens. This display of course must come to us through the revealed word of God, properly understood,—the clouds of types, and symbols, and dark sayings, and the terrestrial exhalations of literal interpretation, giving place to the ethereal medium of vision afforded by a spiritual understanding. In the midst of this heavenly exhibition, the apostle *in spirit* is favoured with a sight of the important symbolical representation he is now about to describe.

‘A woman.’—The word here translated woman, is the same as that rendered Rev. xix. 7, and xxi. 9, *wife*; as we might say in those passages the bride, the Lamb’s *woman*; that is, the woman set apart as belonging especially to the Lamb—espoused, but not yet a wife. The same term, *γυνή*, is also applied to Jezebel, Rev. ii. 20, and to the mother of harlots, Rev. xvii. 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 18. It may be used, therefore, either in a good or bad sense, and we must accordingly judge of its purport by the circumstances under which it is employed. In Rev. xvii., the woman sitting on the scarlet-coloured beast is distinguished by an opprobrious epithet, (*ἡ πόρνη*), and is made desolate and destroyed. Here the woman, however afflicted or tried, is a peculiar subject of divine favour; as appears both from the clothing given her, and the protection afforded to her as well as to her offspring.

§ 267. ‘Clothed with the sun.’—The sun may be put here for the rays, or glory, or light of the sun. It is said of Jesus Christ, Matt. xvii. 2, His face did shine as the *sun*; and Rev. i. 16, His countenance was as the *sun*. So of the mighty angel, Rev. x. 1, His face was as it were the *sun*; and of the justified, Matt. xiii. 43, Then shall the righteous shine as the sun: corresponding with which the Messiah is spoken of by the prophet, as the Sun of righteousness with healing in his wings. This woman is so wrapt about and clothed with the glory of the sun, as to appear like the sun itself. Or, to render the figure still more expressive, one clothed with the sun, may be said to dwell in the sun—to be identified with that orb of light. As the disciple clothed with the imputed righteousness of his Redeemer is in effect identified with him. This woman we suppose to represent the mystery elsewhere spoken of by John, as the Bride, or new Jerusalem; and by Paul, as the Jerusalem from above, which is the mother of us all;—the same figure contemplated under circumstances somewhat different;—the apostle, from his heavenly position, being permitted to look into the divine counsels, and enjoying a stretch of vision compassing even more than appears to be subsequently revealed.

‘And the moon under her feet.’—The feet we suppose to be put for the progress of the person or thing spoken of. To say that the feet are beautiful, is to say that there is something beautiful in the progress (coming or going



forth) of this person or thing. The moon, exhibiting a serene lustre from the reflected rays of the sun, furnishes a representation of the serenity of *peace in believing* enjoyed by the disciple, while trusting in his Redeemer's merits. This peculiar peace afforded by the economy of salvation, may be said to be the ornament of its progress ; that which makes its coming beautiful, as well as that which is necessary for this progress ; as it is by the annunciation of peace, which the gospel carries with it, that its promulgation is effected. The Christian disciple is admonished, Eph. vi. 15, not only to put on the *cuirass* of righteousness, but also to be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace ; to go forth to the legal contest or trial prepared with all the joy and peace in believing, Rom. xv. 13—the hope and trust afforded by the glad tidings of revealed truth. As it is said, Is. lii. 7, “ How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth ;” and Nahum i. 15, “ Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace.” So, too, in allusion to the same economy, Cant. vii. 1, it is said of the prince's daughter, “ How beautiful are thy feet with shoes.”

The word rendered *shod* in the passage quoted from Ephesians, signifies an under binding, (*ὑποδήμα*), as of the sandal. The woman's head-dress and clothing being described, in keeping with this description, the moon under her feet seems to occupy as a figure the place of the sandal ; that is, both the preparation and the ornament of her feet—that which enables the messenger to go on his way, and that which makes his feet *beautiful*, as well as that which constitutes the preparation of the soldier for marching in battle array. As the paved work of sapphire, resembling the body of heaven for clearness, under the feet of the God of Israel, Exodus xxiv. 10, may represent a manifestation of the divine glory ; so the moon under the feet of the woman may be taken for the manifestation of the peace-bringing, peace-exhibiting attribute of the economy of salvation.

§ 268. ‘ And upon her head a crown of twelve stars.’—This crown is of the kind given in token of victory, or of having overcome. The twelve stars, if put for the twelve tribes or patriarchs, may represent the old dispensation,—the sure word of prophecy, shining as in a dark place,—the old dispensation contributing its testimony to the glory of the new, or being put for the twelve apostles ; these apostles especially, as representatives of the gospel, shining as lights in the world. In either case the crown or head-dress, the clothing or raiment, and the preparation for the feet, combine to indicate this female as a figure of the new economy ; not, however, as yet fully revealed, or its gracious provisions yet fully developed.

‘ And she, being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.’—Children, as we have already intimated, (§ 71,) are scriptural

figures of righteousness or merits ; such as enable the disciple to meet his adversary at the bar of divine justice ; or, as we have it rendered Ps. cxxvii. 5, *in the gate* ;—the gate amongst the Hebrews being the place for the administration of justice. The only true means of thus meeting the adversary, are to be found in the imputed merits of the Son of God. The disciple himself under the law being incapable of providing himself with any defence ; whence, in allusion to the change of dispensations, it is said, Ps. cxiii. 9, “ He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be the joyful mother of children.”

The pain and anguish of travail here spoken of, may be figurative of the difficulty existing in the nature of things, in providing a means of redemption for sinners, consistently with the divine attributes of justice and purity. As Jesus himself expresses it, Luke xii. 50, “ I have a baptism to be baptized with ; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished.” But the representation here made, may be rather that of manifesting the mystery of redemption than of effecting the work. The difficulty, we may say, is to show how God may be just, and yet justify the ungodly.

The name Jerusalem signifying the *vision of peace*, we suppose the scriptural exhibitions of the city, under its various aspects, to be put for the exhibitions of the old and new covenants—the vision of the process by which God is reconciled to man. This is to be done in such a way as to establish the manifestation of the truth, to put it beyond any dispute. The elements or principles of the economy are therefore to be tried. As, in the nature of the case, the plan of redemption must prove itself sufficient to overcome the vindictive claim of the law ; so, in the revelation of this plan, it must be shown to possess this sufficiency—it must be shown to bring forth or to furnish a righteousness sufficient to justify the sinner. The difficulty of doing this may be represented by the pains of parturition.

The word rendered *pained* in our common version is the verb elsewhere rendered torment ; and which we have noticed as applicable to the kind of torture imposed upon one tried upon the rack ; or to the kind of test to which a mineral substance may be subjected with the view of ascertaining its purity. Here then, if the woman represent the covenant itself, the test applied is to ascertain its ability to justify the sinner. If the woman be the figure of an exhibition of that covenant, the test is applied to ascertain the power of the plan thus exhibited ; so we may consider the travail of the woman as illustrative of the difficulties in the way of demonstrating, in its true light, what we consider the power of the leading traits of the gospel plan of redemption. The expression, she *being with child*, would be more correctly rendered, she *being pregnant* ; for it is yet to be seen whether, as in the case of the legal covenant, alluded to apparently Is. xxvi. 18, this pain and travail may not be fruitless. The Greek term, according to the

Septuagint, is the same in both passages ; here, however, the mind is to be kept in suspense till the event is announced.

The joy so proverbially consequent to the birth of a child, especially of a male child, may be considered an universal type of the joy resulting to the whole world of the redeemed, from the bringing forth by the economy of redemption of that element of imputed righteousness, which in Christ is the power of God unto salvation ; to this allusion seems to be made John xvi. 21.

Till this truth however is fully developed, the joy may not be experienced ; consequently, the state of the believer individually, and of the whole community of believers, may, in the meantime, correspond with the season of sorrow and anxiety incident to the anguish of travail.

Vs. 3, 4. And there appeared another wonder [sign] in heaven, and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth : and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

Καὶ ὡφθῆ ἄλλο σημεῖον ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, καὶ ἰδοὺ δράκον μὲγας πυρρός, ἔχων κεφαλὰς ἐπτά καὶ κέρατα δέκα καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτοῦ ἐπτά διαδήματα· καὶ ἡ οὐρὰ αὐτοῦ σύρει τὸ τρίτον τῶν ἀστέρων τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ ἔβαλεν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν γῆν. καὶ ὁ δράκων ἔστηκεν ἐνώπιον τῆς γυναικὸς τῆς μελλούσης τεκεῖν, ὅταν τεκῇ, τὸ τέκνον αὐτῆς καταφύγῃ.

§ 269. ‘ Another sign in heaven,’—another symbolical representation in the heavenly exhibition of truth, (§ 266.)

‘ A great red dragon’—or as the original might be translated, *a great fiery red serpent*. The term dragon is but another name for a serpent, and is so employed in the Old Testament, both in our common version and in the Septuagint. It is also applied to Leviathan, Is. xxvii. 1, “ That crooked serpent.” The word translated *red*, *πυρρός*, is formed from the appellation of fire, *πῦρ*. The distinction would be unimportant were it not that with the term dragon we associate no particularly Scriptural idea ; whereas with that of *serpent* we recall to mind that old serpent, the devil, as he is termed in the ninth verse of this chapter ; the tempter of our first parents, (Gen. ii. 3 ;) the *trier* of our Lord, (Matt. iv. 1 ;) and the accuser of the brethren, (Rev. xii. 10.) The *fiery* red colour of this dragon brings up also the remembrance of the fiery serpents, by which the children of Israel were chastened in the wilderness. The same being, character, or principle, therefore, whose efforts were directed in paradise to the bringing of our first parents under the law, by inducing them to taste the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, is expressly declared in this chapter (tenth verse) to be the accuser of the brethren—that is, the legal accuser—the public prosecutor, in a spiritual sense, under the legal dispensation. We must anticipate thus much upon the subsequent portion of the chapter, in order to obtain a clew to the character of the seven heads and ten horns of the monster. He is termed a *great* dragon, no doubt on account of his great



power in urging the condemnation of the sinner; and a fiery-red dragon, on account of the peculiarly vindictive character of his office—an office precisely the opposite of the Redeemer, Mediator, and Justifier. His design or aim must be of course to counteract the justification purposed in the plan of redemption. He may be also termed *fiery-red* in allusion to his trying action upon the elements of redemption, with the view of proving their insufficiency.

It may be asked how such a character can be supposed to have found his way into heaven. Here we must bear in mind that the apocalyptic heaven is not a locality. It is not the abode of the blessed, in a literal sense. It is an exhibition, as we apprehend, of the principles and operation of divine government. In this exhibition (heaven) we must look, therefore, for all the principles or doctrinal elements belonging to the work of redemption; and accordingly we shall here find displayed the covenant or dispensation of mercy on the one side, and that of works, or of the law, on the other. The first carried into effect by the element of propitiation; the last essayed to its utmost by the principle of accusation.

The scene of this passage is somewhat parallel to that of which we have an account in the first chapter of Job: "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord; and Satan (the accuser) came also among them;" these sons of God (adopted principles) being probably equivalents of the *sealed ones* of the Apocalypse; the whole representing principles of divine government, in the midst of which that of accusation is necessarily introduced, and remains until expelled by the superior power of the element of propitiation; as we might say of a monarchical government, where the law is to be enforced, there must be an officer of the crown to act the part of an accuser, in carrying out its requisitions.

§ 270. 'Having seven heads.'—The head of a serpent is the seat of his sting, or power to destroy, (§ 209.) The seed of the woman was to bruise the serpent's head. As it was said by the Creator to the serpent, Gen. iii. 15, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; for sin is the transgression of the law. If the law be taken away, or so fulfilled that it can exact nothing more, there will be then no room for transgression of the law; the sting of death will be taken away. The power of the legal adversary consists in his ability to bring home the charge of sin upon the sinner. This is his sting; and this sting we suppose to be represented by the head in which it is located. The vicarious work of Christ having fulfilled the law in behalf of the disciple, the power of the adversary to urge the sinner's condemnation, and consequent punishment, is taken away—the ser-

pent's head is bruised. These *seven* heads of the serpent may be put therefore, according to our view of the use of the number *seven*, as representing totality, for *all* of his heads of accusation; or they may be put for seven such elements or stings, the tendency of which severally is to bring the sinner under the power of the law, and so by urging his condemnation to subject him to the sting of death. Christ, by fulfilling the law, has crushed the head or the seven heads of the serpent, destroying all the power of the accuser—as it is said, (Ps. lxxii. 13,) breaking the heads of the dragons in the waters; and Rom. xvi. 20, “The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet.”

There may be some correspondence between these seven heads and the seven abominations spoken of Prov. vi. 16:—pride, deceit, cruelty, envy, malice, dissension, false accusation, or something nearly equivalent to them; the rendering of our common version giving probably but a feeble expression of the original. The sinner in the sight of God is not the subject of *false* accusation. Christ himself was falsely accused, but man in divine judgment must be a transgressor, justly meriting punishment. Spiritually, however, the disciple, as adopted and justified in Christ, may be falsely accused; and where the action of principles is represented, those of salvation by grace may be testified against falsely. Pride and self-dependence may be arrayed against humility and self-abasement; deceit against candour—as in the confession of sin: the principles of envy may be viewed as acting against the love of God, and zeal for his glory; the principles of malice against those of brotherly love; and the elements of dissension against the principle of unity in Christ. Thus the seven heads of the dragon may be contemplated as sending forth a progeny of anti-evangelical principles, perpetually in collision with those of a free salvation, corresponding with the enmity predicted between the seed of the woman, and that of the serpent, Gen. iii. 15.

§ 271. ‘And ten horns.’—A horn, as we have already noticed, is the symbol of *power*, (§ 137.) The horns of this great dragon or accuser must represent the power or powers with which he is invested, for carrying into effect the peculiar functions of a public prosecutor. These ten horns are probably opposites in character and operation to the seven horns of the Lamb, (Rev. v. 6.) We are not obliged to suppose each horn to represent a separate and distinct power. The *ten* collectively may be designed to direct our attention to some power designated also by ten elements representing a certain power in the aggregate. If we ask by what power the accuser of the brethren, who accuses them day and night before God, is enabled to accuse, or upon what principle the force of his accusations rests, we must perceive that the power is that of the law—the principle, that the law is not fulfilled in behalf of the brethren; and therefore that they may be ac-

cused and prosecuted for every transgression, and every short-coming. The spirit or power of accusation is sustained by the law, and this law we suppose to be represented by the ten horns; the decalogue, or ten commandments, as a summary, being put for the *whole law*. Each horn as well as each commandment indeed has its power; for, as the apostle says, (James ii. 10,) if we offend in one point, we are guilty of all. But even this principle depends upon that of the continuance of the legal dispensation as a whole.

The Son of God came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it, Matt. v. 17. If he did fulfil it, and if his followers are justified in him by this fulfilment, then who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? or how can the legal prosecutor of the brethren sustain his accusations? It is God that justifieth—who is he that condemneth? (Rom. viii. 33, Is. i. 8.) Hence the power of the accuser's horns depends not only upon the existence of the law, but also upon the position that the law remains still unfulfilled.

§ 272. 'And seven crowns,' or rather seven *diadems*, 'upon his heads.'—The diadem was a white band, or fillet, worn by kings around their usual head-dress—a token of royal authority, or of a participation in that authority—apparently of Persian origin, although in the times of the apostles generally recognized amongst the Greeks and the Romans as a similar token, (§ 55.) The term in the Greek occurs but three times in the New Testament; in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament it is found, according to Trommius, only in the Book of Esther, as the rendering of the Hebrew term for a royal crown, כִּתְרֵי; there it is applied to the crown upon the head of Vashti, afterwards transferred to that of Esther—designating, we may say, the identity of the queen elect with her royal husband and lord. The crown said to be given to Mordecai should be rendered by the term robe, (*stola*), Hebrew מִכְשֵׁי, a token of representation rather than of identity. The royal crown, or diadem, mentioned Is. l. xii. 3, צִדְרִי, *cidaris*, is still something differing from the other two—something to be borne in the hand—said to be a sash worn about the cap amongst the Persians; a token of sovereign favour, according to the prophet, not given to Zion or Jerusalem, but which both or either of these is constituted, "Thou shalt be," &c. The first of these diadems is strictly the *head ornament*, and consequently the kind of diadem worn by these seven heads. Not, as it is very evident, that they are rightfully entitled to the sign of royal power, but that they assume it: as, in the times of the Emperors to assume the diadem was an expression equivalent to that of claiming imperial power.

These seven crowned heads each of them assume in a spiritual sense a supreme authority, or they pretend to it collectively, as in the aggregate constituting the one head of the accuser. We have only further to notice at present, that these crowns are not tokens of victory, (στέφανοι,)



neither the dragon nor his heads being supposed to have overcome, or to be eventually successful; although, so long as he is permitted to wield his horns, the heads may appear to be clothed with sovereign power.

§ 273. ‘And his tail drew the third (part) of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth.’—‘The prophet that speaketh lies, he is the tail,’ Is ix. 15. The stings of the scorpion-locusts were in their tails, (§ 215.) and the power of the Euphratean horse was in their mouth and in their tails, (§ 223.) Corresponding with the construction we have put upon these tails, we consider that of the accuser to represent a false interpretation of the written Word of God; the tail of this dragon being a figure nearly equivalent to that of the false prophet spoken of in a subsequent part of the book. The meaning of the word rendered *drew* would be better expressed by our term *dragged*, as it is a forcible drawing. The third part, or the third, τὸ τρίτον, we have already supposed (§ 191) to be put for the spiritual sense of the thing described. The stars of heaven we consider the lights of revelation—the elements of revelation, as we have them in the Scriptures—the light to the feet and the lamp to the path of the disciple. In heaven these elements appear in their proper spiritual sense;—on earth they appear in a literal sense, being contemplated through the medium of deductions from earthly or literal misconstruction. The action of the dragon with his tail corresponds with that of a literal construction, applied to the Word of God—dragging it down from a spiritual to a literal meaning; as we have supposed heaven to be put for the exhibition of divine government, with all the wonders of redeeming love, in its pure spiritual sense; and the earth an exhibition of the same government, and plan of redemption, as deduced from a literal construction of Scripture. To bring the elements of truth from heaven to earth, is to take them out of their spiritual sense, and to cause them to be contemplated only in a literal sense. This is done by the *accuser* for the reason elsewhere given, that *the letter killeth*. The literal interpretation bringing the sinner under the full power of the law, and thus subjecting him to all the elements of a legal accusation.\*

§ 274. ‘And the dragon stood before the woman,’ &c.—This position of the dragon may be indicative not only of his readiness and eagerness to accomplish his purposes, but also of a certain permanency in the nature of the persecution; this action of the accuser, or vindictive element, being, as we shall hereafter have occasion to notice, an opposite of that of the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, Rev. xiv. 1. There is also a correspondence between this design of Satan and the typical effort of Pharaoh to

\* It may be especially in allusion to this perversion of the revealed word of God, favouring the views of self-justification, although really tending to condemnation, that the devil is said to be a liar, and the father of a lie, John viii. 44.

destroy all the male offspring of the enslaved Hebrews; the name Pharaoh signifying an avenger, or revenger, *Syriacè, Vindicans*, (Onom. Sac. L.,) in allusion to which apparently he is styled, Ezek. xxix. 3, “The great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers.”

The woman we have supposed to represent the covenant of redemption; and the child to be brought forth, the righteousness provided by this covenant; that is, the destined means of counteracting the power of the legal accuser, or avenger—the means of delivering the sinner from a yoke even worse than that of Egyptian bondage. The vindictive spirit of inflexible justice stands ready to absorb, and more than absorb, if practicable, the gracious provision of the merits of a Saviour—to swallow it up, as it were, showing its insufficiency. The whole picture representing the perpetuity necessarily existing in the nature of the case, in the contest between the effort of divine mercy on the one side to spare, and that of strict justice to require its victim. The woman in heaven crowned, with her child, represents the economy of grace with its offspring, destined to be triumphant, which is also equivalent to the heavenly Jerusalem, or to the gospel exhibition of the same mystery, spiritually understood; while Jerusalem in captivity appears to be the figure of an exhibition of the same mystery, under a perverted construction, according to which the merciful purpose proposed would appear to be insufficient and fruitless, as seems to be shadowed forth in the lamentations of the prophet, (Jer. li. 34,) “Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon hath devoured me, he hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty vessel, he hath swallowed me up like a dragon.” So we may say, the economy of grace spiritually and properly understood, as it exists in the divine mind, will manifest itself able to withstand the power of all the judicial and legal elements arrayed against it, and thus to bid defiance to the elements of accusation: literally understood, shackled in its exhibition by a self-righteous interpretation, it will appear as it were swallowed up by the overwhelming power of legal condemnation; that is, its provision, its offspring, its *child*, so swallowed up, or devoured as soon as it is born, as it is figuratively expressed in our text. We hence perceive the necessity the dragon is under of employing his tail in dragging down the elements of revelation from their spiritual sense to a literal sense, as we shall see also hereafter the necessity of the aid afforded by the false prophet to the beast.

V. 5. And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

Καὶ ἔτεκεν υἱὸν ἄρρενα, ὃς μέλλει ποιμαίνειν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐν ῥάβδῳ σιδηρᾷ· καὶ ἡρπάσθη τὸ τέκνον αὐτῆς πρὸς τὸν θεὸν καὶ πρὸς τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ.

§ 275. ‘And she brought forth a man-child,’ *υἱὸν ἄρρενα*.—A son, that is, a male; this double designation of the gender giving intensity to the ex-

pression. "Cursed be the deceiver," it is said, Mal. i. 14, "which hath in his flock a *male*, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing;" that is, who has in his flock a male, but withholds it as an offering. The paschal lamb was to be a *male*; so also the burnt-offering, Lev. i. 3, 10, and the sin-offering, Lev. iv. 23, and xxii. 9. Christ personally is the *male of the flock*—the primary fulfilment of the paschal and Levitical type, as well as of that afforded by the firstling of the flock, of the martyred Abel; the righteousness of Christ, the body of his merits, his moral perfection, offered in behalf of the sinner, being the same *male* of the flock in a spiritual sense as the Apocalypse is spiritually an *unveiling* of Christ. We consider this male child a representation of the element of divine righteousness, provided by God's plan of salvation to be imputed to the sinner, that he may thereby be justified from all, from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses, (Acts xiii. 39;) the same righteousness or body of merit which under one figure constitutes the means of justification, being under another figure represented as the only acceptable sacrifice of propitiation—the male of the flock. This provision, figuratively speaking, is brought forth in the midst of the requisitions of the law, exposed to the peril, if insufficient, of being swallowed up by the legal accuser. Corresponding with this, the exhibition of the same truth, if the principle be insufficient, is exposed to being swallowed up by the exhibition of the requisitions of the law.

As to the matter of fact, the sufficiency of this sacrifice is too well established in the divine mind to be a subject of doubt or apprehension; it is only the *manifestation* of this mystery which can be said to appear in peril at one time, and perfectly secure at another. We may suppose, therefore, this picture to represent the manifestation of the fact, rather than the fact itself; as if we were to suppose the woman in heaven an equivalent for the gospel rightly understood. Thus understood, the true provision for the redemption of the sinner (the righteousness of God by imputation) is unfolded. The adversaries of this doctrine stand ready to show, or to prove its insufficiency, or to *devour* it, contending that it is not equal to meeting the requisitions of the law.

§ 276. 'Who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron.'—This rod of iron must be the same as that to be given to him that overcometh, Rev. ii. 27, and the same as that to be employed by the Word of God, Rev. xix. 15. It must be the *rod* spoken of Ps. ii. 9; and the ruler and nations, or Gentiles, must be those referred to in all these passages, as well as in Acts iv. 25–27. There cannot be two several rulers over all nations, neither can there be two or more parcels of these nations to be ruled over by different sovereigns. The man-child must be, therefore, a representation either of Christ himself, or of that principle of divine righteousness imputable to the disciple, which is personified and manifested in Christ; which in a spiritual



sense rules or predominates, and in the final development of truth is to be exhibited as ruling or predominating, in the most despotic manner, over every other power or principle having any relation to the work of man's salvation. In the heavenly exhibition with which the apostle is favoured, this principle is seen to be brought forth by the economy of grace—that plan of reconciliation or vision of peace, elsewhere spoken of as the holy, heavenly, or new Jerusalem.

This principle, thus brought forth, is that which the legal adversary, the element of vindictive wrath, would destroy, armed as he is with the powers of the law, represented by the ten horns or commandments of the decalogue; these horns being directed in their action by seven legal principles, assuming to be sovereign, each as heads of the serpent carrying with them the sting of death, and all of them alike opposed to the divine purpose of salvation by grace. Or, if we prefer contemplating the number seven as a figure of *totality*, these seven heads represent all the adverse principles of the character ascribed to the accuser; all of them constituting the one head, with its mortal sting, eventually to be manifested as crushed by the fruit of the woman. The accusing spirit is opposed to permitting the existence of a righteousness without the law—Rom. iii. 21—an element of salvation which nevertheless is to manifest its pre-eminence over all others.

The rod of iron in the hand of a ruler we suppose to occupy the place of a *sceptre* in the hand of a sovereign: the token of royalty, or of supreme power. The principle of perfect sovereignty is that by which the element of divine righteousness has power to control all other principles; as if the question were asked, How can the sinner be saved through the *imputation* of God's righteousness? The answer is, because God is a sovereign. He has a right to give, and to give freely to whom he pleases. This principle, therefore, may be said to rule all others with an iron sway; at the same time the power of this exercise of divine righteousness in saving the sinner manifests the sovereignty of God; and thus the rod of iron in the hand of the Saviour is in fact the sceptre in the hand of the ruler; as it is said, Heb. viii. 1, A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

‘And her child was caught up unto God,’ &c.—or rather, according to our edition of the Greek, was conveyed away to God, and to his throne. The word *up* is gratuitously introduced here; the original implies nothing either *up* or *down*. The scene is laid in heaven—the woman brings forth in heaven—even the dragon is seen there, although afterwards cast down to earth. The representation is that of things occurring in the divine councils. The element of righteousness imputable to the believer is identified with the Deity himself; it is God's righteousness—the righteousness of Jehovah; and thus seen, it is manifestly protected from the power of the legal adversary. All the powers of accusation and condemnation cannot

prevail against it—a peculiarity not to be asserted of the righteousness of any created being.

‘And to his throne.’—This imputable righteousness is manifested, in this heavenly exhibition, not only to be the righteousness of God, but its imputability also is identic with the attribute of divine sovereignty. God is a sovereign in the strictest sense of the term—his righteousness is his own, and he has therefore a right to give it—to impute it freely to whom he pleases. Who then shall “imagine a vain thing?” The elements of self-righteousness and self-justification, of legal accusation, and of the powers of condemnation, may, as we might say, take counsel together against this overcoming principle;—but “he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; Jehovah shall hold them in derision.” He has declared the decree: the principle of salvation by grace through the imputed righteousness of Christ is safe in the bosom of the Deity and in the midst of the attribute of his sovereignty, and to this principle eventually all others must be manifested to succumb, Ps. ii. 1-9.

V. 6. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred (and) threescore days.

Καὶ ἡ γυνὴ ἔφυγεν εἰς τὴν ἔρημον, ὅπου ἔχει ἐκτὶ τόπον ἡτοιμασμένον ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἵνα ἐκεῖ τρέψωσιν αὐτὴν ἡμέρας χίλις διακοσίας ἐξήχοντα.

§ 277. ‘And the woman fled into the wilderness.’—The power of the adversary is not sufficient to destroy the element of justification brought forth by the economy of grace; but it is permitted for a time to prevail so far as to bring the revelation of this economy into a position of misconstruction—obliging the woman to fly out of heaven into the wilderness. An operation figuratively parallel to that of dragging the one-third of the stars from heaven to earth.

A woman in the wilderness is equivalent to a desolate woman, having neither husband nor legitimate offspring. The woman is thus seen by the apostle to be in one position, while the man-child is seen to be in another. So there may be those possessed of sufficient spiritual understanding to perceive that the child Jesus is identic with the Father, who nevertheless do not discern the true character of the economy of grace, or perceive how it is that this child, or that which it represents, is the offspring of that economy. The apostle sees both—he has seen the woman bringing forth, and he sees the child preserved; there is no misapprehension in his vision; but he sees the woman in the wilderness as she is destined to appear for a certain period to the eyes of others. Wherever the divine counsels, in this particular, are spiritually discerned, there the woman appears as having brought forth, and her child as being identified with God and his throne. Wherever, on the contrary, there is a prevalence of literal interpretation and legal misconstruction, there the economy of grace is in a desolate posi-

tion, as incapable of bearing any fruit. So the heavens are said to be opened when Christ is perceived in his proper mediatorial as well as divine character ; while they are said to be shut, and the rain even is said not to moisten, where there is no just perception of the efficacy of his vicarious sacrifice.

‘Where she hath a place,’ &c.—It may seem strange that the woman should flee from heaven into the wilderness for safety ;—but the reason is given—she had there a place prepared for her of God ; as the direction was given to Joseph, Matt. ii. 13, “Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word ;” the reason of which is afterwards given, “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my Son.” So the woman fled into the wilderness, that another prophecy might be fulfilled, Is. xxxv. 1 : “The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them ; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.” And when the term of seclusion is accomplished another prophetic allusion is explained, Cant. iii. 6, “Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense ?” and viii. 5, “Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved ?” In accordance with the same divine arrangement, the voice was heard from the wilderness, (Matt. iii. 1,) “Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.” The word of revelation, taken in a *literal* sense, may be said to be a wilderness, or, to the eye of the disciple seen only through the medium of a literal and legal misconstruction, it may present the picture of a wilderness ; but the glad tidings of redemption are still there, although but dimly perceived, and there they are preserved, to be brought forth when by a development of their true sense the whole scene is changed ; the same word of revelation, spiritually understood, becoming a paradise, or presenting the view of a *paradise*.

It is true that the mother of harlots, Rev. xvii. 3, is also seen in the wilderness, but otherwise the two females have nothing in common with each other. The wilderness is a state of seclusion and of humiliation to one, while the other in the wilderness is in her glory ; one may be supposed to mourn her state of desolation, while the other glories in her shame, and rejoices in the power afforded by the peculiarities of her position.

§ 278. ‘That they should feed her there twelve hundred and sixty days,’—or, that she should be nourished there. The economy of redemption is preserved in the letter of revelation until the arrival of the precise contingency when it is to be spiritually understood. No account is given in the Apocalypse of this woman being brought out of the wilderness ; but that she is so eventually, may be safely inferred from the designation of a term during which she is thus to sojourn there ; this term, however figurative,



pointing out an end to the process in contemplation: as, to say that such a limitation of her sojourn in the wilderness was the purpose of God, is equal to declaring the result; for his designs cannot change, or be defeated. The figure employed for illustrating this or any other truth may be dropped and another substituted for it; as we suppose the economy of grace, represented by the mother of the man-child here, to be afterwards represented by the bride or Lamb's wife; the two parts of the vision being not successive but collateral: the one representing a mystery as it appears in heaven—in the divine counsels—while the other represents the same mystery as it will appear when being developed on earth; in accordance with a rule of exegesis we have elsewhere adverted to, that several figures may be employed to illustrate the same truth without confusion; although one figure cannot represent several truths without involving perplexity.

The period of this woman's sojourn in the wilderness, it will be perceived, corresponds with that of the treading of the holy city under foot, and with the prophesying of the witnesses in sackcloth; and if reduced to what we have supposed to be the common sign of three and a half, it will correspond also with the term for the continuance of the dead bodies of the witnesses in the streets of the great city; showing a parallelism between these several illustrations, time in a literal sense not being otherwise a subject of consideration. This *scale of parallelism* serves to remind us that the several effects illustrated proceed from a common interchangeable cause—the woman is in the wilderness, because the holy city and the outer court of the temple are in possession of the Gentiles, which is also the cause of the prophesying of the witnesses, and of the state of the dead bodies in the great city, and so *vice versa*. The evil in all these cases arising from the same literal application and misconstruction of the word of revelation.\*

\* We have already enlarged sufficiently upon the reasons for not considering these twelve hundred and sixty days literally a portion of time, and have noted the difficulty arising from the want of an epoch whence to calculate such a time. By way of making this difficulty more evident, however, we may ask, When did the woman bring forth her man-child? when was that child taken to God, and to his throne? when did the dragon try to devour it, and when did he begin to persecute the woman? If we seek for an answer to these questions in the political and ecclesiastical history of the world, we find nothing to afford us light, unless we go back to the time when the child Jesus was literally born, and calculate the twelve hundred and sixty days from that time; in which case the seclusion of the woman must have terminated more than five hundred years ago. If we seek for an answer in the promulgation of the gospel, we are obliged also to go back to the first preaching of it by the apostles; and if we accept the spiritual interpretation here proposed, and ask, when it was that the economy of grace first brought forth the element of imputed righteousness, we might as reasonably ask when it was that God first found a ransom for the transgressor; when it was that he brought his first begotten into the world, saying, Let all the angels of God worship him; or when it was that it was first said to the Son,

With the close of this verse the account of the woman is suspended, and is not resumed again till we reach the thirteenth verse of the chapter ; meantime we may hazard a few further remarks upon the illustrations afforded by this picture.

The child is not conveyed from earth to heaven, because it is not supposed to have been on earth. Taken to God and to his throne, its perfect safety is manifested. Hence even the great red dragon makes no further demonstration against it. The element of imputed righteousness does not yet appear to human eyes not privileged like those of the apostle, nor is it seen in the earthly system. Its further exhibition is a matter yet in reserve.

The economy of grace, represented by this woman, we suppose to be an opposite of the legal dispensation ; that old economy could not bring forth the righteousness required, as it is intimated, Is. v. 4, "What could I do more for my vineyard than I have done in it ? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes." The element of judicial wrath, represented by the sea, could not bring forth this righteousness ; as it is said, Is. xxiii. 4, "Be thou ashamed, O Zidon : for the sea hath spoken, even the strength of the sea, saying, I travail not, nor bring forth children, neither do I nourish up young men, nor bring up virgins." Neither could the earthly system produce it, as the same prophet declares, (Is. xxxiii. 9, 10, 11,) "The earth mourneth and languisheth : Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down : Sharon is like a wilderness ; and Bashan and Carmel shake off their fruits. Now will I rise, saith the Lord ; now will I be exalted ; now will I lift up myself. Ye shall conceive chaff ; ye shall bring forth stubble : your breath, as fire, shall devour you." Or if the earthly system be made eventually to bring forth that good fruit, it is only by the immediate action of sovereign grace ; as, in the physical world, the rains from heaven descend, and give rise to the springs that water the valleys, affording that moisture whence the fruitfulness proceeds : and even under this aspect the earth is merely an instrument, or vehicle, through which the fructifying element imparts its moisture to the various products emanating from it. So it is said, Is. xlv. 8, "Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness : let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together : I the Lord

"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever ; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom," Heb i. 8 ; or when it was said by this only begotten one, "Lo, I come : in the volume of the Book it is written of me," Ps. xl. 7. When we can assign a time in the history of the world for either of these events as an epoch, we may feel ourselves warranted in calculating the twelve hundred and sixty days or years from it ; and when satisfied on this point, we may consider the other periods as synchronizing with this. Till then we must be governed by the declaration of the mighty angel, that, apocalyptically, *time is no longer*.

have created it." Thus as the desert\* may by divine power be made to blossom as the rose, so the earthly system by the same transforming power may be made to exhibit the rich provision of divine bounty. A change perhaps indicated in the latter part of this vision, where a *new earth* as well as a *new heaven* are said to be seen by the apostle.

Vs. 7, 8. And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place [the place of them] found any more in heaven.

Καὶ ἐγένετο πόλεμος ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ· ὁ Μιχαὴλ καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ τοῦ πολεμῆσαι μετὰ τοῦ δράκοντος, καὶ ὁ δράκων ἐπολέμησεν καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ, καὶ οὐκ ἴσχυσεν, οὐδὲ τόπος εὑρέθη αὐτῶν ἔτι ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ.

§ 279. 'There was war in heaven.'—Here there is a partial change in the scenery, but the scene itself is still laid in heaven. The apostle stops in his narrative of the woman to describe something else going on as it were simultaneously.

In a literal sense there could not possibly be a dissension or contest in the councils of the Most High. This war we may presume to be intended to represent the virtual contest necessarily existing between the principles of redemption on the one side, and those of condemnation on the other. The war itself may be considered equivalent, as a figure, to the throes of the woman bringing forth the man-child; and the birth of the child and its exaltation to the throne of God may be viewed as simultaneous with the expulsion of the dragon from heaven: one event involving the other. The war is not to be understood as commencing with the flight of the woman, but rather as terminating with it. The action of the dragon in

\* The deserts or wildernesses of Scripture are not always to be supposed to be Arabian deserts. Every city in the East, it is said, had its wilderness or neighbouring tract of wild uncultivated land; the soil perhaps not being worthy of culture, producing only thorns and briers. From the manner in which these desert tracts are spoken of in the sacred writings, it is evident that they are to be contemplated as places of great scarcity as to food, water, and shelter; representing a position apparently furnishing neither the pretended security and ample provision symbolized by an earthly city, the work of men's hands, nor the real security peculiar to the heavenly Jerusalem.

To be in the wilderness, in a spiritual sense, is to be in a position destitute of means, either real or pretended, of eternal life. To be sensible of being in such a wilderness may be equivalent to being poor in spirit; a state of conviction of sin, preparatory to a sense of entire reliance upon the mercy and unmerited favour of God. To pretend to a righteousness and sufficiency of one's own, is to fancy ourselves in a city well fortified and abundantly provided, when we are in reality in the wilderness. Reference to this delusion seems to be made, Is. l. 2, "At my rebuke I make the cities a wilderness." To the poor the gospel is preached: this gospel sets forth the wilderness of man's position by nature, but when spiritually understood it sets forth also the shelter and supply provided. The provision once recognized, the wilderness is made like Eden, and the desert like the garden of the Lord, Is. li. 3.



waiting to devour the child is in effect part of the war ; a representation of the same contest by a different figure.

‘ Michael and his angels fought,’ &c.—Michael, according to Leusden, signifies, Who is like to God ? or God striking, or the stroke, the humility, or the poverty of God ; *Micha* signifying, with the other meanings, Who is this ? that is, in this place—reminding us of the question repeatedly put concerning Jesus, Matt. xxi. 10, Luke v. 21, and elsewhere. Combining this signification with the last syllable, *Al* or *Ala*, an appellation of the Deity, especially expressive of strength or power, the whole name carries with it the force of the question, Who is this so like unto God ? corresponding with the captious interrogatory of the Scribes and Pharisees, Who can forgive sins but God only ? *Micha* is also said to signify “ the waters here ;” that is, here are the means of ablution, the fountain of life ; equivalent to the exclamation of the eunuch, ἰδοὺ, ἵδωτε, Lo ! here is water.\*

All these meanings direct our attention to him who was the express image of the Father ; who, although equal with God, humbled himself, appearing in fashion as a man, while at the same time, when occasion called for it, he exercised the power and prerogative of Deity ; who was stricken and smitten—being wounded for our transgressions ; and in whose atoning blood there is opened a fountain for the washing away of sin and uncleanness—the water of life.

Michael and his angels we accordingly take to be a representation of the Redeemer and his gospel principles contending with the Accuser and his self-righteous and legal principles ; a contest between the intercessor or mediator, and the adversary or prosecutor ; a struggle in the nature of things between antagonistic principles—between the requisitions of the law and the provisions of sovereign mercy ; but yet not literally a struggle in the divine mind, because with God the end must be coeval with the beginning. Every cause here being a final cause ;—the world having been created to be redeemed, as the woman was created for the man, and not the man for the woman ; the plan of redemption having been formed before ever the earth was, to manifest the glory of God by causing his goodness, we may venture to say, *to pass before the eyes* of an assembled universe, that his perfections may be illustrated, the consistency of all his attributes manifested, his character made known and rightly understood, and his great name sanctified, Ezek. xxxvi. 23.

§ 280. ‘ And prevailed not,’ &c.—The dragon prevailed not, for it

\* Michael מִיכָאֵל *Quis sicut Deus ? aut humilitas sive paupertas Dei, vel percussio Dei, sive percutiens Deus.* Micha מִיכָא vel מִיכָה *pauper vel humilis, aut percutiens vel percussus, sive quis hic ? id est, in hoc loco : sive aquæ hic.* Ela אֵלָא vel אֵלָה *quercus sive fortitudo, aut Syriacè Deus.* Leus. Onom. Sac. 89 and 186.

was not intended that he should prevail ; but the effort of the accuser in contending, and the triumph of the intercessor in overcoming him, are set forth as occurring in the divine counsels to illustrate the greatness of the work of redemption, and to shadow forth the difficulties in the way of its accomplishment. That a benevolent God should love those that love him would not be a matter of astonishment ; or that a just God should justify the just would not be wonderful ; or that a God of perfect purity should favour beings perfectly virtuous would not be at all mysterious ; but that the same Being who has declared himself a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers even upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him, Ex. xx. 5 ;—that this Being should in any way extend his love to his enemies ; that the same God of infinite justice, who has expressly declared that he will by *no means clear* the guilty, Num. xiv. 18, should still in any way *justify the ungodly*, Rom. iv. 5 ;—that the same God of whom it is said that he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity ; that he is angry with the wicked every day ; that upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest ;—that this God should, under any circumstances consistent with the perfection of the divine character, extend his sovereign grace to those who are deserving only of his eternal wrath !!! here is a matter of astonishment. Here we behold a conflict of moral elements ; and it is in this conflict that the intercessor and the elements of his vicarious and propitiatory work triumph over the accuser, with his elements of condemnation.

‘ Neither was their place found any more in heaven.’—The work of redemption once introduced into the heavenly exhibition of divine government, there is no more room for the operation of condemnatory elements. In the sight of God, Christ has fulfilled the law in behalf of the disciple. Where then is there place or room for the elements of accusation ? It would seem by the expression employed here, *any more*, that these elements once had a place in the divine mind or purpose ; but we suppose this to be intended only to accommodate the subject to human apprehension—as if it were said, ‘ Had it not been for the plan of redemption they would have had their place there.’ But in respect to the manifestation of this mystery, there is a time when the elements of accusation have a place in the view presented of divine government, and a time when they have no such place. The vision now contemplates the period when the development of truth has so far progressed in the apostle’s mind, *in spirit* as he is, that the triumph of the Redeemer appears to be complete, and the elements of condemnation appear as it were expelled from the purpose of the divine government. That government being now seen to be conducted on different principles, we find no further mention of Michael in the Apocalypse ; but it is evident that the same champion is represented elsewhere under different characters,

such as the rider on the white horse, the Lamb, &c. The appellation is employed only in two other passages of Scripture, (Jude 9, and Dan. x. 13 and 21,) where there may be an allusion to the same contest.

The difference between a heaven where the dragon and his angels have a place and a heaven where they have no place, may correspond with the difference between the *first heaven* and the new heaven ;—the first heaven affording a view of the divine counsels in which the accuser and his principles are supposed to have room for action ; the new heaven affording that display in which, the intercessor having overcome, the element of accusation has no place. The first heaven is wanting in the exhibition of imputed righteousness and sovereign mercy displayed in the new heaven ; the same change being elsewhere represented as a consequence of the coming of the day of the Lord, 2 Pet. iii. 10 and 13 : “ But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night ; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise,” &c. ;—“ Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” The event being thus spoken of, in one portion of Scripture, as a change taking place *in* heaven ; and in another, as a change *of* heaven : different figures illustrating the same truth. These changes also being applicable only to the manifestation of the purposes of Deity, and not the purposes themselves ; for the divine mind must be immutable.

In the display of the new heaven and new earth, at the close of the vision, it is also said, *there shall be no more sea* ; that is, in this state of things there shall be no element of wrath ; a peculiarity very nearly equivalent to that of a heaven without an accuser.

V. 9. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world : he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Καὶ ἐβλήθη ὁ δράκων ὁ μέγας, ὁ ὄφις ὁ ἀρχαῖος, ὁ καλούμενος διάβολος καὶ ὁ σατανᾶς, ὁ πλανῶν τὴν οἰκουμένην ὅλην, ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ μετ' αὐτοῦ ἐβλήθησαν.

§ 281. ‘ And the great dragon was cast out.’—“ In that day,” it is said, (Is. xxvii. 1,) “ the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent ; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.” We suppose the sea to be a figure of the element of judicial wrath, and the dragon or serpent in the sea, this slippery tortuous reptile,\* to be the ruling principle of that element. The ejection of the accuser from the heavenly system accordingly corresponds with this punishment of leviathan of the deep, although in the Apocalypse we have not yet reached his final destruction. The instrument of

\* Sept. Ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκεῖνῃ ἐπάξει ὁ Θεὸς τὴν μάχαιραν τὴν ἀγλαν, καὶ τὴν μεγάλην, καὶ τὴν ἰσχυρὰν ἐπὶ τὸν δράκοντα ὄφιν φεύγοντα, ἐπὶ τὸν δράκοντα ὄφιν οὐολιόν· ἀνελεῖ δράκοντα.



punishment, according to the prophet, is the sword—the sword, no doubt, or spirit of the mouth of God ; that is, his revealed word—the revelation of the truth showing the accuser to be thus punished or cast out from heaven : a prediction probably to be accomplished through the instrumentality of this apocalyptic vision.

§ 282. ‘That old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world.’—Here we find, as we have anticipated, this great red dragon to be identic with the Devil and Satan ; Satan being a Hebrew name signifying the accuser, and *diabolos* (the devil) a Greek translation of the same name bearing the same import. The term indeed is sometimes supposed to be applicable to a calumniator or false accuser ; but such a character it is evident could have no power in the presence of an omniscient Judge ; whereas, the devil is said, Heb. ii. 14, to have had the power of death, that is, of condemnation ; Death and Hades being, as we have seen, concomitant powers, (§ 153,) or rather results of the same cause. With me, says an apostle, it is a small thing to be judged of man’s judgment. If the power of Satan extended no further than to slander disciples before their fellow-beings, his operations would be hardly worthy of consideration ; but that which gives him importance is, that his accusations legally are *well* founded. He charges the sinner with sin, and this is no calumny. The falsehood with which he is chargeable does not consist in his accusing man falsely, but in his misrepresenting the purposes of God and the position of man. It is God that he calumniates, not man ; it is the glory and honour of the Sovereign Lord and Redeemer that he would, if it were possible, undermine and destroy.

‘That *old* serpent.’—The appellation carries us back to the account given of this deceiver, Gen. iii. 1, where we find it said of the serpent that he was more subtle\* than any beast of the field, and where we find his subtlety employed in bringing man under the power of the law, persuading him that he may thereby become as God. As the disciple is sometimes deceived with the delusion that by fulfilling the law for himself, he may become perfect as God is perfect. The action of the accusing spirit, from the creation of the world to the present time, has been of the same character ; beguiling man into the persuasion that he is to seek his own glory, and to promote his own interests by the merit of his own works. This spirit we may say creeps into all systems of human suggestion ; as it deceived the Pharisee, going about to establish his own righteousness, so it was exhibited in the

\* More subtle, or wiser, Lat. *astutus*, v. Trom. The term employed in the Septuagint version, *γεννηώτατος*, is that applied to the unjust steward, and to the children of this world, Luke xvi. 8 ; expressive of that kind of selfish short-sighted wisdom, by which a cunning man aims at the accomplishment of his purposes, without regard to the principles of justice, or to the consequences of his actions in a future state.

Galatians, thinking to make themselves perfect in the flesh ; and so its influence is perceived in the idolatrous rites of pagan and heathen worshippers. Nor is this influence confined to past times or to unenlightened countries ; we may detect the presence of the same spirit in the doctrinal views and systems of Christians of all denominations and of all ages. And no marvel, as it is said 2 Cor. xi. 14, for Satan (ὁ σατανᾶς, the accuser) himself is transformed into an angel of light : with great professions of zeal for the fulfilment of the law, the real operation of this deceiver is to diminish the gratitude due to the Redeemer, by exalting the merits of man, and in effect ascribing to the sinner the glory of his own salvation. The self-righteous man flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful, Ps. xxxvi. 2.

‘ Which deceiveth the whole world ;’—or rather, as the original might be rendered, which leadeth astray the whole world—ὁ πλανῶν τὴν οἰκουμένην ὅλην—perverting the whole economy of redemption ; making a legal dispensation of it, and thereby rendering it a field of legal accusation ;—the phrase, whether taken strictly or not, implying a universality of action, applicable to the present age as much as to any preceding age or ages, and to the whole of Christendom as well as to the benighted regions of Asia and Africa.

‘ He was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.’—We have had a specimen of these angels or ministering spirits of the accuser, in the descriptions given of the elements of the bottomless pit, and of the great river Euphrates. They are all with their chief of the same accusatory character, having the same destroying purpose in view ; and proposing to effect this purpose by a maintenance of the same legal views and self-righteous principles, all in effect tending to the same end, that of the condemnation of the sinner.

They are cast out of the heavenly system. They are no longer to be supposed to have a part in the divine council ; they are no longer to be seen in the heavenly exhibition of God’s plan of government ; and it is implied that their ejection is a consequence of the defeat sustained by them in the contest with Michael and his angels. In other words, in the divine mind the accusing power is entirely overcome by the element of propitiation—Christ and his atonement—“ Jehovah has conquered, his people are free !” It would not be difficult to draw an analogy between the liberation of the children of Israel from their state of Egyptian bondage, and the triumph of the elements of redemption over those of condemnation, represented by this defeat of the dragon ; but perhaps the reference is sufficient.

So far, however, we have seen this triumph of the Saviour only as it is seen in heaven—as it is in fact—as it is and has been according to the purpose of God, but not yet, as supposed, to be revealed to man, or at least as understood by man. The dragon is cast out *into the earth*. In the earth,

therefore, or in the earthly system, or in the earthly view of the divine system of government, we are still to find in some shape the accusing spirit, or his vicegerent, together with his ministering spirits—the elements of accusation and condemnation—transformed perhaps on some occasions as angels of light.

## HEAVENLY CHORUS.

Vs. 10, 11, 12. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, (ye) heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Wo to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

Καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν μεγάλην ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ λέγουσαν· ἄρτι ἐγένετο ἡ σωτηρία καὶ ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ ἡ ἐξουσία τοῦ Χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ· ὅτι ἐβλήθη ὁ κατήγορος τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἡμῶν, ὁ κατηγορῶν αὐτῶν ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτός. Καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐνίκησαν αὐτὸν διὰ τὸ αἷμα τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ διὰ τὸν λόγον τῆς μαρτυρίας αὐτῶν, καὶ οὐκ ἠγάπησαν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτῶν ἄχρι θανάτου. Διὰ τοῦτο εὐφραίνεσθε, οἱ οὐρανοὶ καὶ οἱ ἐν αὐτοῖς σκηνοῦντες· οὐαὶ τῇ γῇ καὶ τῇ θαλάσσῃ, ὅτι κατέβη ὁ διάβολος πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἔχων θνῦμόν μέγαν, εἰδώς, ὅτι ὀλίγον καιρὸν ἔχει.

§ 283. ‘And I heard a loud voice.’—This loud voice, or, according to the Greek, *great* voice or sound, being apparently a chorus of voices of all the heavenly elements in unison. Not the voices of those who are themselves the subjects of this salvation, but of those who are the lookers-on, the heavenly spectators. They have been earnestly engaged in contemplating the process of the work of redemption, and they now rejoice in witnessing its accomplishment. As when the foundations of the earth were laid, “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy,” Job xxxviii. 7. This however is the language of a heavenly choir; of those privileged with an insight into the purposes of divine mercy; the mystery of these purposes not having been yet developed upon earth or to the mind of man.

‘Now is come salvation.’—The expelling of the accuser and his ministering spirits constitutes in effect this salvation; and the exhibition of this expulsion in the heavenly display of the work of redemption, is the manifestation of this salvation: “Now is come salvation;” that is, now it is manifested.

‘And strength.’—The strength by which this work of salvation is effected is now also manifested: in heaven at least, corresponding with the exhibition afterwards to be made on earth; as it is said, Is. lii. 10, “The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God;”—this *holy arm* being



a figurative expression for the *strength* of Jehovah ; and that strength, as exercised in the salvation of the sinner, consisting in the imputed righteousness of the same divine Being, elsewhere spoken of as the saving strength of his right hand, (Ps. xx. 6,) and the right hand of his righteousness, Is. xli. 10. In allusion to which it is said, “Trust ye in the Lord forever : for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength,” Is. xxvi. 4 ; “He giveth power to the faint ; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength,” Is. xl. 29 ; “Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength,” Is. xlv. 24.

‘And the kingdom of our God.’—That is, now is come the manifestation of his kingdom, (in heaven.) For we cannot suppose a moment when God did not reign, or when his kingdom had not come. But although always existing, it may not always to certain classes of beings have been equally manifest. The inference to be drawn here accordingly is, that this expulsion of the accuser, this triumph over him, is a proof of the sovereignty of God. As if we should say, in reference to the work of redemption, Now is come the proof of the divine sovereignty ; now the mysteries of the kingdom of God are developed ; the principles upon which this kingdom is established and maintained are unfolded.\*

‘And the power of his Christ,’ or, of *his anointed*.—Christ himself is said to be the power of God, which identifies him with the right hand, or arm, or strength of God. Not that this power of Christ has just come, but now is come the manifestation of it ; Christ personified as Michael, (§ 279,) having just exhibited his power in overcoming the elements of legal accusation, or power of condemnation.

\* The term *kingdom of God* is of frequent occurrence in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke ; although in that of John it is met with but in one passage, where it is used in connection with the subject of the *new birth*. It is to be presumed, however, that John’s gospel treats as much of this kingdom as either of the three others. The term kingdom of heaven occurs only in the gospel of Matthew ; but as it is there used we cannot consider it other than an equivalent for the term kingdom of God.

The mystery of the kingdom of God is spoken of, Mark iv. 11, and Luke viii. 10, and the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, Matt. xiii. 11. Christ began his ministry with preaching the kingdom of God, that is, the mystery of this kingdom ; for except to his disciples he spoke of it in parables. So, after his resurrection, he was with his disciples forty days, speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, (Acts i. 3.) So, Philip preached the things concerning the kingdom of God, Acts viii. 12 ; and Paul spake boldly in the synagogue at Corinth for three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. We conclude, therefore, that to preach the kingdom of God is to set forth the doctrines of the gospel, showing upon what principles God’s kingdom or his sovereignty is established ; the phrase, the kingdom of God is come, or is nigh at hand, being equivalent to the declaration that the exhibition of these principles of divine government are being made, or are about being made.

‘For [or because] the accuser of our brethren is cast down,’ or, cast out.—The verb in the original being that employed in the ninth verse, some editions of the Greek have it combined with the preposition *κατά*; but even this only gives intensity to the expression, not necessarily implying the idea of down or up. The accuser is cast out of the divine system of government. In heaven he is manifested to be so cast out, and that by the power of the element of substitution or propitiation; hence the manifestation, or advent of *the* salvation, *the* strength, and the kingdom of God and the power of Christ; the article in the original being prefixed to the words salvation and strength as well as to that of kingdom. It is not merely salvation and strength in general that is manifested, but the salvation and the strength of God as well as the power of Christ. The term *now* we suppose to be applicable to a certain stage in this development of truth, and not to a particular epoch of time. As soon as the accusing principle is shown to be cast out, then this power of Christ, and salvation, and strength, and kingdom of God, are manifested; corresponding with that which Jesus himself described as a vision of his own mind, Luke x. 13, “I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven.”

§ 284. The appellation *ὁ Κατήγορος*, or *Κατήγορος*, the accuser, is from the verb *κατηγορέω*, a compound of the preposition *κατά*, against, and *ἀγορεύω*, to plead, and is used more particularly in reference to judicial proceedings, (Rob. Lex. 365.) We find it applied, John viii. 10, to those who urged the condemnation of the woman taken in adultery: “Woman, where are thine accusers?” and in Acts xxiv. and xxv., to the accusers of Paul. The Greek term *ἀγορά* is applied to a court of judicature or forum, as well as to a market-place. So *ἀγορεύω* sometimes signifies to speak in the forum, or to harangue, (Jones Lex. 19, 20, and 887,) whence *κατηγορέω*, to speak against, arraign, impeach, denounce, accuse. This term as well as that of *diabolos* has been supposed to denote a calumniator, or *false* accuser, (Rob. Lex. 365;) but for the reason we have already given, (§ 282,) to confine it to that meaning here would destroy the whole force of the passage. As the verb is employed, John v. 45, it signifies something very different from calumny: “There is one that accuseth you, even Moses in whom ye trust.” Moses was no false accuser. If he could have been so regarded by the Jews, they would have thought the appeal to him of very little moment. If the devil or Satan be a *false* accuser, then his power is exercised only against the innocent, and then this salvation and strength of God, and the power of Christ, are manifested merely in saving the innocent from the effects of calumny; a salvation for which the attribute of divine Omniscience alone would have been sufficient. But if this accuser be one whose office it is to bring criminals to justice, who argues and pleads for their condemnation, having the advantages of law and fact on his side, then those whom he

accuses or argues against must be sinners, or their advocates or intercessors—criminals obnoxious to the vengeance of inflexible justice ; and if so, then there is indeed a display of might and power in overcoming the powerfully sustained arguments of this accuser. The power of Christ is manifested in justifying the ungodly who believe in him, Rom. iii. 26, and iv. 5. Here there is room for the display of *sovereignty* ; the sovereign power alone being able to pardon the justly condemned criminal. Here too there is indeed a mystery to be solved. It would be no mystery that a just God should declare the innocent to be justified ; but it is a mystery that the same just Being should himself provide a way of escape for the criminal ; still more a mystery that this way of escape should consist in an arrangement by which the actual transgressor appears in the light of an innocent person. The cause of rejoicing too is represented to be that *the accuser is cast out* ; whereas, if he were a mere calumniator, or slanderer, it would be a sufficient cause of rejoicing that the falsehood of his representations had been detected ; and in this case the glory of the justification must necessarily redound to the accused, and not to any mediator or intercessor. The war in heaven might in such case have been spared ; the work of redemption would not have been required, and there would have been no room for offerings of praise and gratitude to the Lamb. The devil may be the calumniator of the Most High, and as a teacher of self-righteousness and of self-justification he is a liar, and the father of a lie ; but as the accuser of sinful man, his charges are but too well founded, and an Almighty Redeemer alone can deliver the transgressor from his vindictive power.

‘Who accused them before God day and night.’—Even an evil spirit could hardly be supposed so perversely mad as to prefer, without ceasing and for ages, *false* accusations before an *omniscient* Judge ; but the principle of legal accusation sustained may be regarded as continually in operation : it is only ejected from the divine scheme of government by the counteracting element of propitiation. The law having been transgressed, there must be on the part of retributive justice an unceasing demand for condemnation ; a demand to be satisfied only by the eternal punishment of the transgressor, or by some adequate vicarious suffering.

‘They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb.’—This chorus or loud voice in heaven is not that of the combatants themselves, but of the spectators of the contest ; they rejoice that the *brethren* are triumphant. The war was carried on by Michael and his angels, (Christ and the elements of redemption,) and the victory is theirs ; consequently these angels of Michael, or elements of redemption, must be *the brethren* alluded to. They have overcome the accuser by virtue of the propitiatory sacrifice of their leader : the LAMB in the work of propitiation ; the LION in the *contest* with the accusing spirit, (Rev. v. 5 and 6.) Apocalyptically, as already intimated,



we do not suppose these *brethren* to be the beneficiaries of the victory just gained. Christ has laboured, and his followers enter into his labours, enjoying the fruit of his work : he has fought the battle, and his people enjoy the benefit of the victory. Michael and his angels—the intercessor, with all the elements of the economy of redemption—have not been contending for their own sakes with the accuser and his legal elements ;—the battle has been fought on account of a world to be redeemed ; but this world has not itself been engaged in the contest. In this heavenly picture we contemplate the battle ground, we see the array of warriors on either side, we learn the issue of the contest, and are taught to whom the glory of the victory belongs ; but the subjects ultimately interested in the event are not presented to our imagination.

It is not the sinner himself that overcomes in this contest, for then the glory would be his :—it is Christ that gains the victory ; and it is the work of Christ, with the principles of *grace* involved in this work, which counterbalances and overcomes the requisitions of the law. The *brethren* overcome “ by the blood of the Lamb,”—the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, 1 Pet. i. 19 ; the blood of Christ which cleanseth from all sin, 1 John i. 7. This blood could hardly be called for if the charges of the legal adversary were mere slanders ; but the question occurs, If these brethren be the elements or principles of the work of propitiation, and not the beneficiaries of that work themselves, in what sense can they be said to have overcome *by the blood of the Lamb* ! This we may understand better perhaps after examining the subsequent clause.

§ 285. ‘ And by the word of their testimony.’—In the account given of the expulsion of Satan and his angels by Michael and his forces, the figure employed is that of a fight. In the relation given of the same contest in this song of victory, it is very evident that the figure is changed ; and that instead of a battle a contest before a judicial tribunal is contemplated. The devil is spoken of as one who argued against the brethren day and night before God ; and these brethren we suppose to be elements of intercession belonging to the array of the great Advocate, pleading the blood of the Lamb in behalf of the real defendant, the sinner. The expression might, therefore, be thus rendered, Now is come salvation, &c. ; for the legal adversary of our brethren, who argued against them continually before the Judge of all, is cast out ; he is no more permitted to plead or to argue on the side of the prosecution in this highest court of judicature. Prior to this expulsion, however, we may suppose the same character to have been continually arguing, as we have before suggested ; while on the other side the advocate for the offender, (the Lamb,) with the brethren, or all the elements of intercession, plead for justification as counsel for the defendant. The prosecutor sustains his accusation by the elements of law, together with the evidence

of facts. The offence is not denied on the other side, but the counsel for the guilty party plead a full satisfaction, made not merely in mitigation of punishment, but as a ground of full and entire acquittal. The elements of propitiation, or of vicarious sacrifice, on the part of the defence, plead the *atonement of Christ*, and by the evidence they offer gain their cause, and overcome the prosecutor in this judicial contest, as Michael and his angels is represented to have done in that of a martial character. The figure differs, but the contest is the same; and the real victor, to whom alone the glory of success is due, must also be the same. So also the beneficiaries are the same; but these last, as in the former case, are not brought forward in the picture. The whole attention of the spectator is supposed to be taken up with the conduct of the trial; as it sometimes occurs in human courts of justice, that the party on trial is scarcely observed amidst the intense interest excited by the efforts of the counsel on both sides to obtain a verdict.

Under this aspect we may easily form an idea of the character of the testimony of the brethren. The accuser brings his witnesses on the stand to testify to the requisitions of a broken law; the brethren are brought forward by the mediator—the intercessor—to testify to all the power of the propitiatory elements of salvation by sovereign grace. This is the *word of their testimony*, by virtue of which they obtain their triumph over the legal adversary. Here indeed the character of the accuser may appear in the light of a slanderer or calumniator: as, in his efforts to destroy the testimony offered in behalf of the accused, he misrepresents the principles of sovereign grace, places a false construction upon their tendency, creates a false issue so as to conceal their relevancy to the case, and accounts, as it is said of those under his influence, the blood of the covenant as an unholy thing, Heb. x. 29.

‘By the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony;’ that is, the testimony of the brethren.—These are not two powers of salvation, but two expressions of the same power; the one being involved in the other. *Αὐτὸν λόγον τῆς μαρτυρίας αὐτῶν*, by or through the speech—the argument—the whole subject matter of their evidence or testimony; of which evidence Jesus Christ is the alpha and omega, and his propitiation the whole substance. Whether we speak of pardon through the atonement of Christ, or of justification through his vicarious work, the *logos* of the whole testimony is the same.

‘And they loved not their lives unto the death.’—Here again the figure changes to a certain degree. In the first clause of the verse these brethren appear as of counsel for conducting the defence, and are said to have overcome by pleading the blood of the Lamb. In the second clause they appear as witnesses, testifying to the truths of redemption; by which testimony also they are said to have overcome. Lastly they appear as *martyrs*, ready

to give up their lives in maintaining their testimony. This expression, however, may have a further signification ; as if it were said that these elements readily gave up their natural sense to maintain the spiritual sense of their testimony :—the term *ψυχῆς*, rendered here *lives*, although in the singular, being applicable to the natural life or soul, in contradistinction perhaps to *πνεῦμα*, as having a more spiritual signification.

§ 286. ‘Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them.’—Satan has just been cast out from heaven ; the heavenly system has been freed from the accusing principle : therefore, it is for this system and its elements to rejoice. Here, as in the counsels of the Most High, the element of Christ’s propitiation reigns paramount.

“Wo to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea ! for the devil is come down unto you.”—Some editions of the Greek, as that from which we copy, omit the words, the inhabitants, and give the reading, wo to the earth and to the sea ; the difference is not very material, but we are inclined to think our common version to be most correct in this particular. The heavens, and the *inhabitants* of the heavens, are first called upon to rejoice ; and the antithesis is most complete if we suppose those that dwell in or upon the earth also to be mentioned as subject to the *wo*, corresponding with the common editions, *οὐαὶ τοῖς κατοικοῦσι τῆς γῆς καὶ τῆς θάλασσης*. This reading also corresponds best with the denunciation of the *three woes*, Rev. viii. 13, which are all woes to the inhabitants of the earth ; and the last of which is probably the wo here spoken of as the consequence of the coming of Satan. The elements of the earthly system of self-righteousness and the elements of the sea system, or abyss system of legality, are in jeopardy from the coming of Satan ; because, as the legal prosecutor, the exercise of his functions tends to exhibit the insufficiency of these elements as means of salvation.

‘Having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.’—Having great eagerness to accomplish his object. We do not suppose this short time is to be taken in a literal sense. The time given to the tempter to operate upon the mind of every human being individually, must depend upon the life of the individual ; and collectively mankind have been subject to the delusions of Satan ever since the creation of the world. We suppose the idea of time here is to be qualified by the circumstances of the vision. Satan has been cast out of his heavenly sphere of action, and the time is now at hand when such is to be the development of truth that he will also be ejected from his position in the earthly system ; all his powers are therefore now summoned for this last and greatest effort—this third *wo* of the last trumpet ; and in proportion as the final development of truth is at hand, he is the more vehement in his action. In this speedy action, perhaps, also a portion of the wo just pronounced consists ; as one trusting



to his own merits or claims to moral perfection is sensible of no cause of alarm till he hears of an accusation about being preferred against him ; or as the offender against the laws of society feels himself safe so long as he is not summoned before a tribunal of justice, or so long as his conduct is not the subject of inquisition. The action of the third *wo* then consists in the immediate trial to which the earthly elements are subjected in consequence of the coming of the accuser or legal prosecutor amongst them. The devil is vehement because the period of his action is short : the inhabitants of the earth have reason to be alarmed because their moment of trial has now come.\*

V. 13. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child [or the male].

Καὶ ὅτε εἶδεν ὁ δράκων, ὅτι ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν γῆν, ἐδίωξε τὴν γυναῖκα, ἣτις ἔτεκε τὸν ἄνδρα.

§ 287. ‘And when,’ &c.—The chorus being concluded, the narrative is here resumed, but the scene presented to the apostle’s mind is changed. He had been contemplating things in heaven : he had seen the offspring of the woman safely brought forth and taken to the throne of God ; he had witnessed the flight of the woman from heaven to the wilderness ; he had seen something of the war in heaven, and had also witnessed the expulsion of the devil and his angels from their heavenly sphere of action. He now, although perhaps still retaining his heavenly position, contemplates what is going on in earth, or, as we say, in the earthly system.

‘And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, or, [*into* the earth, vid. v. 9,] he persecuted,’ &c.—The first impression seems to be here that the dragon persecuted the woman, because he saw himself cast out of heaven ; but we rather think the sense intended is, as if it were said, When the dragon saw that the earth was allotted to him as a scene of action, then he applied himself to the persecution of the woman. Perhaps this may be said to arise from the nature of the case : the woman, or economy of redemption in the earthly system, is seen without her child. The element of imputed righteousness is to be discerned only from a heavenly or spiritual view of the gospel mystery. Under a literal construction the economy of redemption, although still nominally retained, must appear fruitless and desolate ; and in that aspect incapable of withstanding the element of legal accusation. In this state, therefore, it must appear as in a wilderness, until

\* The devil is very commonly styled the *tempter*, but perhaps he would be more correctly denominated the *trier* ; the Greek term *πειράζω*, from *πείρα*, experiment, sometimes rendered *tempt*, signifying primarily the action of trying, as in the assay of metals, or putting one to the proof, as in the trial of a person accused. Of temptation, in the ordinary sense, it is said every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts, (James i. 14.)

the aspect under which it is contemplated is changed, and it is seen either in heaven or as coming from heaven. So soon as the economy of redemption appears to be deprived of the element of imputed righteousness, on which it depends for its efficiency, so soon it appears open to the assaults of the adversary.

As it is said of a state of things somewhat similar, represented by the dissension in the family of the patriarch Abraham: He that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, (Gal. iv. 29.) We do not say that Ishmael was a type of the dragon, or that Isaac occupied precisely the position of this woman in the wilderness; but we feel no hesitation in assuming that the spirit of accusation, as an offspring of man's position by nature, under the law, and dependent upon his own merits, may be said to resemble him that was born after the flesh. So the element of justification represented by the child of the woman is the offspring of sovereign grace, without any intervention of human merit, and thus bears an *analogy* with that provision of sovereign mercy, which we suppose to have been typified in some respects by the child of promise. In these particulars, the persecution of Isaac by Ishmael is not unlike that of the woman by the dragon. The persecution of the son of the bondmaid consisted only in mockery, while that of the dragon was, as we shall see, an effort to overwhelm and to destroy. The spirit and purpose in both cases, however, is the same, that is, to set at naught, and to bring to naught, the object of aversion.

V. 14. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

Καὶ ἐδόθησαν τῇ γυναικὶ δύο πτέρυγες τοῦ ἀετοῦ τοῦ μεγάλου, ἵνα πέτηται εἰς τὴν ἐρημον εἰς τὸν τόπον αὐτῆς, ὅπου τρέφεται ἐκεί καιρὸν καὶ καιροὺς καὶ ἡμῖν καιροῦ, ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ ὄφεως.

§ 288. 'And to the woman were given,' &c.—The wings of an eagle we have before supposed to indicate the support and protection of the Holy Spirit—the Comforter and evangelical Teacher, (§ 128.) This idea is rather confirmed by the use of the term *great*—two wings of a great eagle. The duplex character of this symbol also reminding us of the twofold, or cloven tongues of fire exhibited on the occasion of the descent of the Holy Spirit; an appearance indicative of the double sense of the language of revelation. The exhibition of the economy of grace is preserved in the written word of revelation by the Holy Spirit, both in a literal and spiritual sense, but for a certain period it is thus preserved as in a state of seclusion, or as not being perceived in its true character; this temporary position being spoken of as a place prepared for the woman. This economy has its place in the Scriptures, even in their literal sense, but it is not recognized; or, if recognized, appears as it were childless or desolate, as the Greek

term derived from the word rendered *wilderness* sometimes implies, Rob. Lex. 261.

‘That she might *fly* into the wilderness, into her *place*.’—The wildernesses of Judea were mountainous, and we may reasonably suppose such to be the desolate place contemplated in this passage. A mountain is to a city a foundation, as a rock is to a place of defence. This place of the woman was therefore her mountain—her rock—that upon which she could *rest*; as, in reference to the circumstances of the disciple, it is said, Ps. xi. 1, “How say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?” and Ps. lv. 6, 7, “Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo! then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness.” As in reference to the same mountain it is also said: If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? As a besieged party when hard pressed falls back to his fortified position on some neighbouring height; so the economy of salvation finds its means of preservation from the elements of accusation, amidst all the disadvantages of self-righteous construction and literal interpretation, in the simple position that Christ alone is the rock or foundation upon which the disciples’ hopes of salvation are to be placed; every doctrine tending to a different position, being manifestly erroneous. In Christ, and in him only, the sinner can be saved;—this is the fundamental truth, by whatever variety of figures the doctrines emanating from it may be illustrated. In the midst even of the earthly system, the economy of grace, however imperfectly understood, is to be found resting upon Christ as upon a rock. Upon this foundation neither the rage of the accuser, nor the gates of Hades, (the powers of condemnation,) being able to prevail against it. Into this position it is conveyed by the two wings of the Holy Spirit, the literal and spiritual sense of revelation; and here it is preserved till the period of perfect development.

§ 289. ‘Where she is nourished\* for a time, times, and half a time,’ &c. —Comparing this expression with what has been before said of the same sojourn of the woman in the wilderness, (verse 14,) we perceive this term to be equivalent to a year, two years, and half a year of three hundred and sixty days, or altogether twelve hundred and sixty days. We are at a loss to assign a reason why the designation of this period should be thus repeated in the same chapter and in this form, unless it be that a similar expression is employed in a remarkable prediction of the prophet Daniel, where the reign of the fourth beast is spoken of as enduring until a *time*,

\* The words *feed* in the sixth verse of this chapter and *nourished* in the fourteenth verse, are both expressed by the same Greek term; the repetition probably being intended to indicate the identity of the periods expressed in one place by days, and in another by *times*.



*times*, and *the dividing of time*, (Dan. vii. 25 ;) the dividing of time and half a time being equivalent terms. The expiration of this period being also afterwards spoken of by the same prophet as the *time of the end*, (Dan. xii. 7.)

Whatever construction be put however upon these predictions of the prophet, we are still governed in our views of this period as mentioned in the Apocalypse, by the declaration of the mighty angel, *time shall be no longer* ; and accordingly, for the reasons before given, (§§ 251, 278, 230, 240.) we assume this mystical expression to be a *sign of parallelism*, indicating, not the synchronical character of certain events, but what we may style the correlative and interchangeable character of the peculiar features of a certain doctrinal system ; all these pictures being so many representations of one mystery—symbolical representations, involving each other.

The woman is assigned a place in the wilderness, and she appears there *desolate*. (Gal. iv. 27,) for the same reason that the outer court of the temple is given to the Gentiles ; and it is, instrumentally, because they have possession of this outer court, and of the Holy City, and because the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth, that the woman appears as in a wilderness : so wherever the two witnesses prophesy *in sackcloth* the woman will appear desolate ; as the children of the bride-chamber fast when the bridegroom is taken from them ;—a bride deprived of her spouse, or a woman without legitimate offspring, being alike figures of that state of desolation to which the economy of redemption appears to be reduced, when Christ is no longer discerned as the Redeemer and Husband ; or when his imputed righteousness is not perceived to be the fruit of the plan of sovereign grace.

We find, for example, the *covenant of grace* spoken of by learned divines ever since the gospel was first preached ; if not in terms, at least by implication ; but the offspring of that covenant, the *imputed righteousness* of Jehovah, has been nearly lost sight of : strictly speaking, we may say it is not to be met with in any *earthly* view of the plan of redemption. So amidst the multiplicity of views of Christian doctrine we find Christ universally admitted to be the Redeemer ; but we hardly find in any of them that exhibition of the covenant, of grace showing the identity of the redeemed with this Redeemer, which enables the children of the bride-chamber to rejoice.

‘From the face of the serpent.’—This expression is not, we apprehend, a mere redundancy. It is probably designed to give greater prominence to the peculiarity of the woman’s position in *the place* assigned. That she is there entirely out of the reach of the serpent, the accuser, or prosecutor,—not even subject to accusation or trial ;—as the rule of the Roman law, well known in the time of the apostles, was, that no one should be tried

without being permitted to meet his accuser face to face : so, to be removed from the face of the accuser, may be figuratively equivalent to being removed from a position of trial.

Vs. 15, 16. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman ; and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

Καὶ ἔβαλεν ὁ ὄφις ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ ὅπισω τῆς γυναικὸς ὕδωρ ὡς ποταμόν, ἵνα αὐτὴν ποταμοσφόρητον ποιήσῃ. Καὶ ἐβοήθησεν ἡ γῆ τῇ γυναικί, καὶ ἠνοιξεν ἡ γῆ τὸ στόμα αὐτῆς καὶ κατέπιε τὸν ποταμόν, ὃν ἔβαλεν ὁ δράκων ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ.

§ 290. ‘And the serpent cast out of his mouth.’—The serpent is the accuser of the brethren, the counsel for the prosecution, the advocate of condemnation. Whatever comes from his mouth must be of the nature of an argument opposed to the side of mercy ; as it is said of similar characters, Ps. xxii. 13, “They gaped upon me with their mouths as a ravening and a roaring lion ;” Ps. v. 9, “Their throat is an open sepulchre.”

‘Water as a flood.’—As a fountain, water is an element of life ; as a flood, it is an instrument of destruction. As a fountain, it is the figure of a Saviour’s atonement ; as a flood, it represents the vindictive agent of offended justice. The flood from the mouth of the accuser of the brethren must have been a flood of accusation ; a flood of elements opposed to the covenant of mercy, or economy of redemption ; an allusion to which may be made, Is. lix. 19 and 20 : “When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him, and the Redeemer shall come to Zion,” &c. ; the pouring forth of this accusation being in effect the means of placing in a prominent point of view the provision to meet and to counteract it.

‘That he might carry her away with the flood.’—As the legal adversary would have swallowed up or devoured the provision of imputed righteousness, or vicarious element of justification ; so he would now, by an array of all the arguments to be drawn from the principles of the law, and from the admitted fact of the sinfulness of sin, overwhelm the gracious purpose of divine sovereignty, showing if possible its insufficiency to protect the transgressor from the punishment justly merited. This figure may be designed to represent the tendency of the broken law in the nature of the case ; or the action of the element of divine vengeance when exhibited or brought forward to try the strength of the economy of grace. As if a polemical advocate for the legal system should bring forward, in argument, the strict requirements of the law in heart and mind, as well as in outward deportment, and should then show the immensity of the sinner’s offences, and his infinite short-comings, together with the necessity of an adequate vindication of divine justice ; thus endeavouring to prove salvation by grace to be

inconsistent with the perfection of the Deity, and so to carry the doctrine away as he supposes with a flood.

We are not told how long this persecution of the accuser continues ; but the presumption is, that so long as the woman remains in her desolate state, so long she is subject to this trial ; while on the other hand, so long as she is found in her place—*on her mountain*—she is safe ;—as it is said of the house built upon a rock, Matt. vii. 25, “The floods came, the winds blew and beat upon that house, but it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock ;” the case of the woman being parallel with that of the individual believer, whose shelter from the wrath to come rests upon this rock of his salvation. Time indeed, apocalyptically, is here also out of the question ; but the action and counteraction of the principles represented may be considered simultaneous, and the general rule applied—“Where the carcass is, there shall the eagles be gathered together.”

‘And the earth helped the woman,’ &c.—We do not suppose the earthly system to be professedly opposed to the economy of redemption ; on the contrary, it contains this economy, but contemplated under a literal aspect, and subjected to a self-righteous misconception. This helping, however, may not be viewed as a voluntary action, but rather as something arising out of the nature of the case. The earthly system is a literal exhibition of revealed truth ; it receives the economy of redemption, but as in a desolate state, not yet at least as the bride adorned for her husband. Such a system is therefore open to the attacks of the adversary, and the flood of accusation, which cannot affect the true plan of mercy, falls upon this misrepresentation of it. The accuser pours out his flood of legal elements and principles of condemnation, drawn from man’s state by nature, upon the earthly system ; and by this it is absorbed before it reaches the woman, whose *place*, besides, is a sufficient protection for her. Thus the earth helps the woman by causing a *diversion*.

‘The earth opened her mouth ;’—that is, this system puts forth or exhibits its elements and principles ; and in doing so shows itself to be obnoxious to the flood of wrath from the mouth of the accuser, against which the true plan of salvation is secured. It thus swallows or takes up the element of destruction intended for another. We are not told what is the further consequence to the earth, but we may suppose the swallowing up of this flood to be one figure of the *wo*, to which the earth and those dwelling upon it are now exposed : we say one figure, because we take the next chapter to be the commencement of a new series of figures of the same *wo* ; covering ground already past over. The swallowing up of the flood by the earth, we may suppose to represent the termination of the contest, so far as the woman is concerned. The covenant of grace itself is no more directly attacked, but the same spirit of hostility exhibits itself in another direction.



V. 17. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Καὶ ὀργίσθη ὁ δράκων ἐπὶ τῇ γυναικί, καὶ ἀπῆλθε ποιεῖσαι πόλεμον μετὰ τῶν λοιπῶν τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτῆς, τῶν τηρούντων τὰς ἐντολὰς τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ἔχόντων τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ.

§ 291. ‘And the dragon *raged* against the woman.’—This was not merely for the moment when she first took flight, or when the flood was first poured out; we may presume it to be something continual in its action, although the object of hostility may not be directly attacked. The legal accuser rages perpetually against the economy of grace, perpetually exhibiting the wrath of offended justice as opposed to the exercise of mercy; which exhibition, instead of affecting the arrangement of grace, is applicable only to the literal and self-righteous scheme presented by the earthly system. All this action we say must be continual, in the nature of things, as long as the male child is not *revealed from heaven*; or so long as the principle of imputed righteousness is not manifested as the offspring of the covenant of grace.\*

‘And went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep,’ &c., or, with the remaining ones of her seed;—the opposites of the rest of men who repented not, mentioned Rev. ix. 20. The Greek term οἱ λοιποὶ, being rendered in one place the rest, in the other the remainder. The signification of the word is strictly plural, corresponding with the *et cetera* of the Latins, and applicable to all other principles or elements of the class under contemplation: *id omne genus*. The seed of the woman was to bruise the serpent’s head; this we apply more especially to the male-child, the element of divine righteousness brought forth by the purpose of sovereign grace to countervail the plea of a broken law. But with this we suppose the same covenant, or purpose to bring forth a multitude of auxiliary and subordinate elements or principles, which as forming parts of the same plan, or expression of the divine mind, (the Logos,) are figuratively spoken of as those *who keep the commandments of God*;—the element of imputed righteousness being out of the reach of the accuser, protected as it is by the principle of divine sovereignty; and the economy of redemption as a whole being also safe, protected as that is by its place resting on its mountain—Christ. The attention of the adversary, like that of a skilful military commander, is directed to the outworks, making war upon elements and principles, all intimately connected with these two special objects of hostility; but apparently more or less in proportion as they seem to be more or less dependent upon these distinguishing elements of truth. This warfare might be illustrated by adverting to a multitude of polemical discussions upon points of Christian doctrine, in which neither the element of imputed righteousness nor the plan of sovereign grace are distinctly or directly the

assailed. The woman and her male child may be both out of sight, and as it were out of reach in these controversies, but the remaining principles of doctrine connected with the development of the divine plan of redemption, are pursued with unrelenting virulence.

‘And have the testimony of Jesus.’—That is, they all bear testimony to Jesus; principles figuratively spoken of as *martyrs* witnessing for the truth, —testifying of Christ, especially as *the Saviour*—and on this account peculiarly the object of the accuser’s hostility.

There is no mention in the Apocalypse of any other seed or offspring of the woman than the male child. The expression *οἱ λοιποὶ τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτῆς*, must be taken as a *license of vision*; *the remaining ones of her seed* being other principles of the same character, figuratively assumed to be a kindred offspring, from their character and tendency. As if the question were asked, Who are these? The answer is immediately given, Those that keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus. This, as we may say, being the gospel rule of kindred; corresponding with the declaration of Christ himself, “My mother and my brethren are those which hear the word of God, and do it,” Luke viii. 21, and elsewhere.

Of the commandments of God, one of the most prominent is *to believe on him whom He hath sent*; but, apocalyptically, “those which keep the commandments of God” may be put here for elements of doctrine so sustaining the requisitions of the law, as to manifest the necessity of a *super-human* provision to satisfy its demands;—the serpent making war upon these elements by bringing down, when it suits his purposes, the standard of law to the supposed capability of human fulfilment; thereby endeavouring to show the absence of a necessity for the scheme of redemption.

According to our text, those which keep the commandments of God are also those which have the testimony of Jesus Christ; which testimony is declared, Rev. xix. 10. to be the spirit of prophecy. Those that have this testimony, we suppose accordingly to be all the elements of the prophecies; as well as all elements of the interpretation of the divine purposes, tending to exhibit Jesus Christ as the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, Rom. x. 4. This war of the dragon is therefore equivalent to the general hostility continually carried on by the spirit of legal accusation against the covenant of grace, as exhibited in the law and the testimony. Perhaps an equivalent of the war made against the two witnesses prophesying in sackcloth by the beast from the bottomless pit, as related in the last chapter, (Rev. xi. 7.)\*

\* Our edition of the Greek, with some others, closes this chapter with the words “Καὶ ἐστάθην ἐπὶ τὴν ἄμμον τῆς θαλάσσης. And I stood upon the sand of the sea;” but this clause so evidently belongs to the subject of the next chapter, that we prefer following the arrangement of our common English version in this respect.

## RETROSPECT.

§ 292. In the first part of this chapter we are indulged with an insight into the secret purposes of Deity. The temple of God having been opened, even the Holy of Holies is exposed to view. The plan of divine wisdom laid before the foundation of the world, for the redemption of that world, is revealed.

We have witnessed the throes, the travail, the difficulties existing in the way of the consummation of this plan—the efforts of vindictive justice to defeat the design of sovereign mercy. The element of salvation—the *imputable righteousness of Jehovah*—has been nevertheless brought forth, and we have seen it safely sheltered in the love and sustained by the sovereignty of the Most High. The element of man's salvation triumphs over the power of accusation, and is destined to rule and to control every opposing principle, as with an iron sceptre.

The difficulties here overcome have been besides exhibited to us as the martial power of an enemy conquered only by Him, who is the express image of the Almighty; the result of this contest being apparently a necessary consequence of the manifest sovereignty of the element of redemption, *taken to the throne of God*; the elevation of the man-child, and the victory of Michael, constituting one triumphant display of redeeming power, and giving occasion to a joy in heaven corresponding with that typically spoken of by the prophet, as a joy according to the joy of harvest—as victors rejoice when they divide the spoil. “For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian. For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace,” Is. ix. 4–6.

The accuser being driven from heaven by the power of the element of propitiation, or of vicarious justification, we have the assurance that whatever may be the mistakes of man upon the subject, the power of Christ is invincible. The disciple therefore may safely cast his care upon Him, who is thus manifested to be able to save to the uttermost.

So far, however, we have seen things only as they actually exist in heaven; the latter part of the chapter exhibits to us things as they appear on earth. The accuser has really no power in God's system of government; but he appears to have great power in man's view of that system.



Driven from heaven to earth, the element of accusation is seen directing its energies in the first instance against the exhibition of the economy of grace, endeavouring to prove its insufficiency ; and when incapable of doing this, undermining the various principles connected with it—principles spoken of as the seed of the woman. Perhaps the same offspring as that alluded to in the language of the prophet: “Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me (are) for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.”—“To the law and to the testimony : if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them,” Is. viii. 18 and 20.

The latter part of this chapter, from the flight of the woman to the end of her sojourn in the wilderness, and probably to the end of the war made upon her seed, covers the same ground as that occupied by the other symbolical narrations, characterized by the three and a half years’ standard, which may be symbolized by the measuring-rod given the apostle, to measure the temple of God and the altar, and them that worship therein. We are to expect, accordingly, in the subsequent portion of the book, not something different from what has been already represented, but a further development of the same mystery ; the particulars of this war carried on by the dragon against the woman and the remnant of her seed. The devil however in the earthly vision, as we shall see, does not appear in his true character. There he acts by proxy, under an assumed garb : he is a deceiver ; and he could not deceive, if he exhibited himself in his proper colours. Those who bow with submission to his vicegerent may not be aware of the master whom they really serve. Accordingly we do not find him making his appearance again in this apocalyptic narrative, till we reach the twentieth chapter ; where he is represented as altogether deprived of power, even upon the earth, for a certain period.

We are not sufficiently advanced in this revelation to make an application of the subject. We are but just now entering the commencement of the third *wo* ; the picture of the influence of Satan upon earth and upon the earthly system. Hitherto our attention has been occupied with particulars of the different characters of this dramatic vision, preparatory to the principal development of the plot. The interest increases as we advance, and the chapter we have just gone over gives us a general idea of what we are further to expect. The *plot thickens* ; but still it remains for us to see in what manner this earthly warfare is conducted, and which of the parties is triumphant here.

It may be a disappointment to some who accompany us in this examination, that, according to our construction of the term *brethren*, they are not themselves to be viewed as combatants in the heavenly contest with the dragon. They wish to share the glory of the triumph, not merely as recipi-

ents of its advantages, but as victors who divide the spoil ; and they say, If this be not the case, what interest have we or others in the representation we have been *witnessing* ? We would ask them, When Jesus was wounded for their transgressions, did they take a part in his wounds ? When he was smitten, afflicted, chastened, did they share in his sufferings ? When he was forsaken of God, were they also forsaken ? When he poured out his soul unto death, did they pour out their souls unto death ? Yet it was by these very sufferings, and by this very death, that the victory we have been contemplating was obtained. *He* was wounded for our transgressions ; *he* was bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon *him* ; and with *his* stripes we are healed. He trod the wine-press *alone*, and of the people there was none to help. Shall it be said because we are not sharers in the work we have no interest in it ?

The mystery of salvation is set before us in the Apocalypse, as it is by the symbolical history of the Old Testament ; by the visions of the prophets ; and by the literal history of the New Testament. The whole *modus operandi*, with the difficulties of the work, are exhibited on the one hand, and all the proofs of its sufficiency on the other ; and this is done for the purpose of engaging our *faith*. As if it were said, Behold the coming deluge ! here is the ark ! satisfy yourselves of its strength and capability to protect you, and fly to it for refuge while there is yet time. Is it for the passer-by to say within himself, I have had no share in the labour of constructing this wonderful provision for escape ; I can reap no glory from it ; and I can feel therefore no interest in it ? Or is it not rather for him to ask, Shall all this be done in vain for *me* ? Shall the infinite wisdom of the Deity be engaged in devising a means of salvation for a world of sinners, consistently with his justice and his perfect purity, and shall I treat this plan of mercy with contempt, or contemplate the exhibition of it with indifference ?

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THIRD VO CONTINUED.

## THE BEAST FROM THE SEA.—THE BEAST FROM THE EARTH.

V. 1. And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

Καὶ ἐστάθην ἐπὶ τὴν ἄμμον τῆς θαλάσσης· καὶ εἶδον ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης θηρίον ἀναβῖαν, ἔχον κέρατα δέκα καὶ κεφαλὰς ἐπὶ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν κεράτων αὐτοῦ δέκα διαδήματα καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτοῦ ὀνόματα βλασφημίας.

*The Beast from the Sea.*

§ 293. ‘And I stood upon the sand of the sea.’—The scene is now changed, at least in the foreground of the exhibition. The apostle is still *in spirit*; he sees things in their spiritual sense, but his position during the contemplation of the present spectacle is changed. In heaven he saw things as seen in heaven; on earth he saw things as they are on earth, but with a spiritual discernment.

The time of this spectacle, if the term be admissible, commences with the coming down of the dragon or serpent to the earth. The earth is allotted to Satan for a certain period of time, as the earthly system is assigned to the influence and operation of the element of accusation. The sea, we suppose to be a figure of the element of vindictive wrath: wrath justly deserved on the part of man, and for that reason the subject of apprehension, (§ 124)—the sea and the waves roaring, being a cause of the distress and perplexity of nations, and of the failing of men’s hearts for fear, spoken of Luke xxi. 25, 26. A position on the sand of the sea must be the converse of a position upon a rock or mountain. The apostle stood not merely upon the *sea shore*, but upon the sand of the sea; a quicksand, a movable foundation, and a foundation to be moved, even by the overwhelming element to which it is peculiar. He thus occupies the position of one who builds his hopes of salvation upon a sandy foundation; not that his own faith is of this character, but he is thus placed that he may see and understand the peculiarities of such a condition. As Paul was caught up in



spirit into paradise, that he might discern the peculiarities of that position ; and as John himself had been favoured with a position in heaven, to enable him to understand the things of heaven ; so he is now brought into the position enabling him to contemplate the earthly system, especially as exposed to the action of the element of wrath.

‘ And saw a beast rise up [or rising up] out of the sea.’—The Greek term rendered *beast* here is an entirely different one from that designating the four living creatures around the throne, which our translators have also rendered *beast*, (§ 125.) The animal now described is of the ferocious, destructive, and unclean character, and as such the opposite of any thing set apart as acceptable to God ; while it equally represents something hostile to the welfare (the eternal welfare) of man. Whatever the character of this animal be, however, it is an emanation from the element of vindictive wrath ;—*rising* or *coming up*, as it is rendered in the Rheims version. The action is not confined to a particular moment, it is something continually in operation. Any one who occupies the sandy position from which the apostle makes his observations, if gifted with a spiritual understanding, may be said perhaps to see this beast coming up, or emanating from the element of wrath. It is in the nature of a legal element of wrath to give birth to a principle or spirit of the kind represented by this animal.

§ 294. ‘ Having seven heads.’—The number of these heads is the same as that of the heads of the serpent or great dragon, and we apply to them the interpretation already given to the heads of that monster. They are leading and directing principles. Taken severally, or as a whole, they constitute one head, having perhaps seven peculiar characteristics ; and if, as we think it probable, they represent the heads of the great serpent transferred to this beast, then also, like the heads of that monster, they contain the sting : the sting of the legal adversary, which carries with it the power of characterizing the action of the sinner as a legal transgression, or as sin ; and which thus constitutes that deadly venom,—that *finishing of its operation*, which bringeth forth death or condemnation, (James i. 15.)

‘ And ten horns.’—The horns also correspond in number with those of the fiery red dragon, and we suppose them also to be the same. They are powers—powers of the law, (§ 271,)—the ten being put for the whole law, or for so many characteristics of the whole law, or for the infinity of obedience which the whole law requires ; every jot and tittle of the law being to be fulfilled :—the power of these horns depending of course, as before suggested, upon the fact that the law has not been fulfilled, either in effect by the disciple, or vicariously for him.

‘ And upon his horns ten crowns ;’ or, as before, ten *diadems*.—Here there is a difference between this beast and that designated as the great dragon : the dragon wore these diadems upon his heads ; the beast carries them upon

his horns. This may be because his horns possess only a real power, while the dragon assumes a regal authority for his heads of accusation; or we may consider the horns of the beast as occupying the place of the hand of a man—the instrument of power, whether of offence or of defence. Thus the diadems on the horns of the beast may be equivalent as a figure to the diadem in the hand—that is, the kind of diadem or royal *shawl* carried in the hand as a sign of *delegated* power—as distinguished from the *identity* of power, symbolized by the diadem placed upon the head of one participating in the authority of the sovereign, (§ 272.) We incline to this latter construction, for the reason that this beast is a *representative on earth* of the dragon, as we shall see hereafter; and in this respect an opposite of her of whom it is said, Thou shalt be a royal diadem in the hand of thy God, (Is. lxii. 3.) We might indeed suppose the beast to affect the appropriation of these insignia of royalty to his ten elements of legal power, acting under the hypocritical pretence of magnifying the law, and of making it honourable; but there does not appear to be, in the subsequent picture of his character, even this affectation of modesty.

‘And upon his heads the name of blasphemy;’—or, according to our Greek edition, names of blasphemy;—every head importing a blasphemous pretension; and, as a whole, the seven heads constituting one name, or grand pretension, of the same blasphemous character. The horns are not impressed with the blasphemous character; for the law is good, if a man use it lawfully. It is only the perversion of its use that is to be deprecated. But the leading principles of this beast, that is, the whole spirit and tendency of its action, is blasphemous.

Blasphemy, according to some, (Rob. Lex. p. 109,) may consist in calumny or evil speaking; but this does not appear to be the Scriptural sense of the term. Amongst the Jews, as we see from John x. 33, the crime of blasphemy consisted essentially in the pretension of making one’s self equal with God. In this respect, the motive urged by the tempter to induce the transgression of our first parents was itself a blasphemous one; urging upon them the consideration that by the opening of their eyes they would become as gods, knowing good and evil: this being the first case on earth, we may say, in which the knowledge of the law was perverted to a blasphemous purpose. Blasphemy, strictly speaking, then, is the attempt to deify *self*—to put one’s *self* in the place of God—to make one’s self an object of worship and service; an effect corresponding with that ascribed to the man of sin—the son of perdition, 2 Thess. 4: “Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”

If we suppose the distinguishing characteristics (heads) of the beast to be self-dependence, self-justification, self-redemption, self-exaltation, self-glori-

fication, self-adoration, self-service, or self-devotion, (worship,) or elements of this description, we shall perceive that they all of them bear the stamp of blasphemy,—all tending, or pretending, to place the individual actuated by them in the position of the Sovereign God.

V. 2. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as (the feet) of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat [throne], and great authority.

Καὶ τὸ θηρίον, ὃ εἶδον, ἦν ὅμοιον παρδαλεῖ, καὶ οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ὡς ἄρκου, καὶ τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ ὡς στόμα λέοντος. καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ δράκων τὴν δύναμιν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐξουσίαν μεγάλην.

§ 295. ‘And the beast which I saw was like,’ &c.—All three of the animals here spoken of are wild beasts of the earth, peculiarly ferocious and destructive, as well as Levitically unclean. They are also spoken of by the prophet as eventually to be so changed in temper and disposition as to associate with animals of an entirely opposite character. The leopard is to lie down with the kid; the cow and the bear are to feed, and their young ones to lie down together; and the lion is to eat straw like the ox, Is. xi. 6, 7. The beast from the sea however is not said to resemble either of these wild animals altogether, but apparently only in certain particulars.

‘Like a leopard.’—As the likenesses of the other two animals are confined to certain specified members of the body, and that of the leopard is not so restricted, the inference is that this last is applicable to the general appearance of the animal. The leopard is scripturally distinguished for his spots; as it is said, Jer. xiii. 23, “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?” A leopard is thus an opposite of the lamb without spot, (Numb. xxviii. 3, and 1 Pet. i. 19,)—the lamb without spot representing Christ: spiritually, the righteousness of Christ, unmixed with any human merit—the only *propitiatory* oblation acceptable to God.

A garment of salvation, supposed to be wrought partly of the merits of Christ and partly of those of the disciple, is a garment spotted by the flesh; an opposite of that in which the church is supposed to be clothed by her Redeemer, Eph. v. 27, “Not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.” Corresponding with this, a doctrine or system of doctrines of a mixed character, destructive in its nature as well as unclean or impure in the sight of God, may be figuratively spoken of as having the appearance of a leopard. Such we suppose to be the characteristic of the spirit or principle represented by this beast; something professedly Christian, but in fact so amalgamating pretensions of human merit with a professed reliance upon Christ as virtually to ascribe to man the glory of his own salvation.

§ 296. ‘His feet were as (the feet) of a bear.’—An animal the opposite of the cow or heifer—destructive and unclean. The bear is said to hold its prey with its fore-paws, embowelling the animal in its possession with its



hinder feet ; in which peculiarity it may represent the character of those of whom it is said, Rom. iii. 15, " Their feet are swift to shed blood : destruction and misery are in their ways ; and the way of peace have they not known ; " that is, they are strangers to the way of peace, or of reconciliation with God, pointed out in the gospel. The heifer was a sacrifice of propitiation ;—the bear, not parting the hoof, was wholly unfit for this purpose. So the tendency of certain doctrinal principles are as hostile to the sinner's salvation as the bear is adverse to the heifer. The feet of the bear are also remarkable for their ugliness ; in this they are figuratively opposites of the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, that bring glad tidings of good things, Rom. x. 15. They bring only tidings of fear and terror ; that is, they represent doctrinal principles of this import.

' And his mouth as the mouth of a lion.'—The beast is not described as generally like a lion, as was the case in what was said of the living creature in and about the throne. He resembles the lion only in his *mouth*. " Save me (says David) from the lion's mouth ; " " They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion." It is not merely the lion's roar that is terrific ; the sight of his mouth is as the sight of impending destruction. So we may suppose the tendency of the spirit or principle represented by this offspring of the element of vindictive wrath to be not merely of a denunciatory character, but one which enforces its views with a threatening of immediate destruction—views, the opposite of that doctrine which is said to drop as the rain, and that speech which is said to distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass, Deut. xxxii. 2.

The apparel, the head dress, and the ornaments of the feet, of the woman in heaven bearing the man-child, were described in the last chapter. In this chapter we have the outward appearance, or skin, the feet, and the mouth of the beast from the sea as particularly detailed ; the contrast of the two figures suggesting the probability that, to a certain degree, one is nearly equivalent to an opposite of the other ; the woman bringing forth the element of justification being the harbinger of peace, while this beast from the sea is the messenger of wo. Here, too, we may have a specimen of the manner in which the woman and her seed are persecuted by the serpent ; that is, by his getting up something of a counteracting tendency ;—the beast and the false prophet representing principles, and the harlot, sustained by the beast, representing a system ; all opposed to the elements of the economy of grace, and all emanating from the power of the legal accuser, or all indebted for their power to his.

§ 297. ' And the dragon gave him his power and his seat, and great authority ; '—or, the dragon gave him his strength, throne, and great power. Here we have the explicit declaration that this beast is the representative of the

accuser of the brethren or of the legal adversary : “ All this power will I give thee, (said the devil to Jesus,) and the glory of them,” (that is, of the kingdoms of the world,) “ for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou, therefore, wilt worship me, all shall be thine.” We may presume the beast to be a worshipper of Satan, or he would not have received the strength, authority, and power, spoken of: “ The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.” Strictly speaking, the devil has no power or dominion; but, spiritually, he had been cast to earth;—the earth had been allotted to him as a field of operation: in the earthly system he has power. The condition prescribed by Satan was therefore equivalent to this, that if the Redeemer would make his work of propitiation subservient to establishing the power of the accuser, the elements of the earthly system should be subordinated to him, (Christ.) It is only in this sense that the devil could be supposed to give power and authority. The beast accordingly renders his ministration subservient to the views of the accuser; he may be presumed to fulfil this condition; and by so doing he obtains, virtually, power and authority over the elements of the world, or over what we call the earthly system.

It is a peculiarity of the management of Satan, that he does not appear in this earthly system in his own character. This is the assigned field of his operation: here he is to carry on the war against the woman, and against her seed; but he does not do this in his proper person. Another takes his seat, supplies his place, and occupies his *throne*, if such it can be called; and to this other he gives his strength—the strength which he derives from the law, as symbolized by the ten horns, (transferred from his own head to that of the beast,) and great authority, or ruling power, as figured by the diadems upon the horns. We may therefore consider the two characters nearly identic; as much so as the viceroy and the sovereign; remembering only that when the viceroy is taken away the sovereign may still be supposed to remain. Meantime the beast for a certain space possesses the legal power of the accuser, and is directed probably by the same heads or ruling elements of condemnation.

Something parallel with this seems to take place in the gospel dispensation, when viewed under a certain aspect. The legal dispensation is generally admitted to have passed away, and of course the office of the public prosecutor is no more avowedly recognized; or rather he himself is not recognized in that capacity. If, however, in this professedly new state of things the disciple be supposed to depend for eternal life upon the working out of some holiness or righteousness of his own, the office of the accuser is again revived,—the element of self becomes in effect the legal adversary; *self* or man, like the betrayer of Jesus, becoming his own accuser and executioner. For if a man pretend to justify himself by works of righteousness

of his own doing, he becomes in the result his own legal prosecutor. It is sufficient for us, however, at present, to bear in mind that, whatever be the delegated power possessed by the beast, the whole of it is derived from the accuser, and depends for its efficiency on the false assumption that the law still remains to be fulfilled by the disciple—that, notwithstanding all that Christ has done, salvation is not of grace.

Vs. 3. 4. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who (is) like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

Καὶ μίαν ἐκ τῶν κεφαλῶν αὐτοῦ ὥς ἐσφαγμένην εἰς θάνατον, καὶ ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ ἐθεραπεύθη. καὶ ἐθαύμασεν ὅλη ἡ γῆ ὅπισω τοῦ θηρίου, καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ δράκοντι, ὅτι ἔδωκε τὴν ἐξουσίαν τῷ θηρίῳ, καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ θηρίῳ, λέγοντες· τίς ὅμοιος τῷ θηρίῳ; καὶ τίς δύναται πολεμῆσαι μετ' αὐτοῦ;

§ 298. ‘And I saw.’—These words are not to be found in all editions of the Greek, but the sense is unavoidably the same; the appearance of this head, as well as that of the others, being part of the vision.

‘One of his heads as it were wounded to death;’—or, I saw one of his heads as (if) it had been slain or slaughtered, ὥς ἐσφαγμένην;—precisely the same words, with a change only of the gender, as those applied to the Lamb as it had been slain, Rev. v. 6;—a slaying or slaughtering as of a victim offered in sacrifice. Death in this vision is not merely a circumstance, but a personage or mystery; and the preposition εἰς may be rendered *unto*, as well as in: εἰς τί οὖν ἐβαπτίσθητε; εἰς τὸ Ἰωάννου βάπτισμα—“*Unto* what then were ye baptized? *Unto* John’s baptism,” Acts xix. 3. The passage therefore might be thus rendered: I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain or slaughtered in sacrifice unto death;—the same death that was seen riding on the pale horse, and which is on that occasion, as well as on others in this Apocalypse, associated and almost identified with hell or Hades. Taking these particulars into view, whether the passage will bear this construction altogether or not, we cannot help thinking that the phrase wounded to death, or *slaughtered to death*, is not a mere redundancy. The idea intended to be conveyed seems to be, that one of those heads appeared as if it had been offered in atonement, or that it represented a principle of professed propitiation.

‘And his deadly wound was healed;’—or, the stroke or plague of its death was healed, or, his plague of death was healed. A deadly wound or a stroke of death must be a mortal wound or stroke, and it could not be so unless attended with death. To heal such a wound must be equivalent to a restoration to life. The head appeared as if it had been slain or dead, but it was now alive. In explanation of this, we suppose the apostle to see the



beast in its proper light. To other eyes a propitiatory sacrifice appears to have been made by the beast. The head to them appears as if it had been slain—as if an atonement had been made ; while to the view of the apostle the head is healed, or appears, as in fact was the case, as if it had never been slain. Or perhaps we may say, at first sight the head appeared as having been slain ; but upon more just examination the illusion vanished, and it appeared otherwise. Or, as we might say of a doctrine of Christian faith, which apparently on a first apprehension admits of the efficacy of an element of propitiation, but afterwards, in effect, sets the agency of such an element aside. Reminding us of the theories of those who commence their views of religious doctrine with an avowed reliance upon the atonement of Christ, as the only means of salvation, but who virtually, if not professedly, lose sight of this element in their reliance upon other foundations of hope, or other supposed means of justification. Without shedding of blood, or loss of life, there is no remission of sin. Here there was no actual loss of life, and consequently no actual atonement. Such we may suppose to be the pretended propitiatory provision peculiar to a principle, which, notwithstanding its professed support of the doctrine of the atonement, places all the disciple's hope of pardoning mercy upon some merit or righteousness of his own.

§ 299. ‘ And all the world wondered after the beast ;’—or, as it is in the Greek, all the *earth* wondered, &c. That is, all they of the earth—the dwellers or inhabitants of the earth—those against whom the *wo* is pronounced : the elements of the earthly system, personified as human beings led away by their admiration of what appears to them the wonderful power of the beast. The devil had come to the earth and to the sea with great vehemence ; but from the account here given we find him no sooner on the earth than he gives his power and authority to another. He does not appear himself ; he deludes and governs in his earthly dominions by the specious appearance and pretensions of his viceroy. The whole earth is deceived or led astray, excepting, we suppose, the sealed ones mentioned in the seventh chapter ; this perversion of the elements of the earthly system being apparently coeval with the operation of withholding the wind from the earth—of suppressing the spiritual sense of revelation as far it is connected with this earthly system. We were not told indeed what the four angels did after the one hundred and forty-four thousand of the tribes were sealed, but we may presume they then fulfilled the functions assigned them. When the dragon came down to earth, the court was given to the Gentiles, the two witnesses prophesied in sackcloth, the woman bearing the man-child fled to the wilderness, the beast with seven heads and ten horns made his appearance, and all the elements of the earthly system were per-

verted to sustain his authority ; as the people of Samaria were led away by their wonder after Simon the sorcerer, saying, Surely this is the great power of God, (Acts viii. 9, 10.)

‘ And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast ;’—or, according to some editions of the Greek, *because* he gave power unto the beast. It is said of some, Rom. i. 25, that they worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator. Here the inhabitants of the earth worship and serve the accuser of the brethren, rather than the intercessor ; the legal adversary, rather than the mediator. This we may suppose they do, not because they recognize the dragon in the beast, but because, being deluded through the instrumentality of the beast, in following after him, they virtually worship and serve the devil in their ignorance and unbelief of Christ. Some barbarous nations, it is said, professedly worship the evil spirit ; and do this, as they declare, lest he should harm them. Strange as this may appear to more enlightened minds, there is something analogous to it in the views of those who are operated upon in their religious conduct by no other motive than the fear of accusation, on the part of their legal adversary, before the tribunal of divine judgment. Instead of flying for refuge and protection to him who has fulfilled the law for them, and subsequently performing their duty to Him, in gratitude for their deliverance, they are driven to obedience, as by the lash of the task-master, and literally pay divine honours to the accuser, or worship the dragon from fear of his malice. Such we suppose to be the mistake illustrated by the conduct of these inhabitants of the earth.

§ 300. ‘ And they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast ? who is able to make war with him ?’—It is a characteristic of idolatry, that it admits of the worship of more gods than one ; but we do not suppose these earthly idolaters to be taken as *professedly* worshipping both the devil and the beast. We are not to suppose them so far acquainted with the history of the dragon and with the mystery of his representative, as to recognize these two distinct characters. They have not been witnesses of the war in heaven, or of the expulsion of the dragon from heaven to earth, nor are they privileged as we are with a knowledge of these transactions, through the account given by the apostle. Nor have they like the apostle seen this beast originating from the element of wrath ; they see him only as he is in the exercise of his power, with his seven heads or attributes, and his ten instruments of exacting obedience. If they perceive his head as it had been slain and again restored, they see in this a token of his triumphant power ; but they do not recognize him as a mere creature. They are supposed to substitute him in their apprehension for the Creator and sovereign Ruler of all, or for a representative of the Deity, identified with God. They apply to the beast the question implied in the name of Michael, (§

279.) Who is so like unto God? Who is so able to save to the uttermost? And who is so much like Jehovah that there is not any able to contend with him? To them the beast is a manifestation of Deity.

The beast however, as a figure, we suppose to be rather an opposite of God the Saviour and Redeemer, (Christ,) than of God the Creator and Supreme Governor. As in the heavenly scene the accuser or dragon is the opposite of the man-child, or element of propitiation and justification; so, in this earthly scene the beast is something the opposite of Christ, as he is also in some respects of the woman; with this difference, that the accuser opposes the man-child and the woman in heaven as an open enemy: the beast on earth operates against both of these, by substituting himself in their place. On this account he is, apparently with good reason, supposed to be a figure pre-eminently of Antichrist; that is, of some supposed principle or element of salvation, the opposite of the means represented in Christ. For to whatever object the disciple ascribes his eternal salvation, to that object he is bound to devote all his worship and service. The earthly system, or the elements of this system as a whole, here personified, in their tendencies exalt the principle represented by the beast to an equality with God; or rather, they virtually recognize no other God or Saviour than that thus represented. This delusion or perversion of these earthly elements being, as we have observed, part of the war carried on by the dragon against the woman and against the remnant of her seed; the remnant keeping the commandments of God, and having the testimony of Jesus Christ, being exceptions to those denominated *all the earth*—exceptions probably elsewhere symbolized as the one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed ones.

Vs. 5, 6. And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty (and) two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

Καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ στόμα λαλοῦν μεγάλα καὶ βλασφημίας, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἔξουσία ποιῆσαι μῆνας τεσσαράκοντα δύο. Καὶ ἤρριξε τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ εἰς βλασφημίαν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, βλασφημῆσαι τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν σκηνὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ τοὺς ἐν τῇ οὐρανῷ σκηνοῦντας.

§ 301. ‘And there was given to him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies.’—The beast is described in the first instance as having the mouth of a lion; but this we may suppose to be a separate figure from the present. In addition to the lion’s threatening aspect, and the language of terrible denunciation, it was given to the beast to speak *great things*; and as these great things are coupled with blasphemies, the conclusion is suggested that they are something of the same kind—something corresponding with the language of the fourth beast, spoken of Dan. vii. 25, “And he shall speak (great) words against the Most High.” The word *things*



indeed is not in the original in this passage of Revelation, the adjective *μεγάλα* only being expressed ; as it occurs also, according to the Septuagint, Dan. vii. 8, where the *little horn* is said to have a mouth speaking great things, *λαλοῦν μεγάλα* ; which things are styled by the interpreter *words*, in the twenty-fifth verse, where the term *great* is omitted in the original Hebrew, as well as in the Greek of the Septuagint : the term *λόγους* in the last being put for words ; a term which carries with it the idea of doctrines or reasonings. Speaking great things is very different from doing great things ; as it is said of God, (Luke i. 49,) He hath done great things ; or, He doeth great things. The beast is only a speaker of great things—a vain boaster. Such was the character of Nebuchadnezzar previous to his humiliation, when walking in his palace he boasted of the might of his power, (Dan. iv. 30 ;) and such was the language of Lucifer, who is described to have said in his heart, “ I will ascend into heaven ; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God : I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north : I will ascend above the heights of the clouds ; I will be like the Most High,” (Is. xiv. 13, 14.) Similar characters are alluded to 2 Pet. ii. 18, “ Who speak great swelling words of vanity ;” Rom. i. 30, “ Proud boasters, inventors of evil things,” (false doctrines ;) and 2 Tim. iii. 2, “ Covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers ;” so the tongue is described, James iii. 5, as a little member boasting great things. Of the nature of this boasting, we obtain a further insight from the argument of the Apostle Paul, showing that a great design of the plan of sovereign grace is to exclude the possibility of any foundation for such arrogance : Eph. ii. 8, 9, “ For by grace are ye saved,” \* \* \* \* “ Not of works, lest any man should *boast*.” Rom. iii. 23, 24, and 27, “ For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus :” \* \* \* \* “ Where is *boasting* then ? It is excluded. By what law ? of works ? Nay : but by the law (or rule) of faith.”

We suppose the speaking great things and blasphemies of the beast to be of this description ; corresponding with the pretensions of the *man of sin*, 2 Thess. ii. 4, already quoted ; in effect giving himself out to be God.

Jesus Christ (God in the flesh) is called the author of life, *ἀρχηγός τῆς ζωῆς*, Acts iii. 15 ; *ἀρχηγός τῆς σωτηρίας*, Heb. ii. 10, the author or cause of salvation ; *αἴτιος σωτηρίας αἰωνίου*, Heb. v. 9, the efficient cause of eternal salvation, (Rob. Lex.)—the merits or righteousness and propitiation of Christ, imputed to the disciple, being this efficient cause of salvation. Opposite to this, any one making his own merits the efficient cause of his salvation, puts himself in the place of Christ—making himself equal with Christ ;—which is equivalent to putting his own righteousness in the place of God’s righteousness—making himself equal with God. Such is in effect the *boasting*, vain words, blasphemy, pride and arrogance of the principle

of self-righteousness ; a very different sentiment from that charity, *which vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly*, (1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5.) We readily recognize the unseemliness of this boasting spirit, when it exhibits itself between man and man ; how much more must we admit its extremely odious character, when exhibited by the creature towards his Creator ; by the sinner towards his Redeemer. Yet such is the presumptuous operation of that spirit which, however professedly Christian, places the eternal happiness of man upon some meritorious work, or goodness, or righteousness, or perfection of his own. If we ask, Where is such a spirit to be found ? the answer appears unavoidably to be, that we shall find it in the *heart of man*. As it was said of the kingdom of God, (Luke xvii. 21,) so we may say of the kingdom of the beast to every inquirer, “ Behold, the kingdom of the beast is within you.”

§ 302. ‘ And power was given to him to continue forty and two months ;’—or, more properly, power was given him to do, or *to act*, or, as some editions have it, *πόλεμον ποιῆσαι*, *to make war* ; that is, not merely to exist, but to continue in full operation, to contend with the truth ; the term forty-two months being applicable to the active agency of the beast, and not merely to his continuance in being. This period of forty-two months corresponds with that of the treading of the holy city under foot, (Rev. xi. 2 ;) and turning the months into days, as before, it corresponds also with the other periods of twelve hundred and sixty days, Rev. xi. 3, xii. 6 ; and allowing times and days to represent years, with the three and a half days of Rev. xi. 9, and the time, times, and half a time of Rev. xii. 14. As in all the other cases there is no epoch given for the commencement of this term, we must suppose the beast to begin to act when the dragon gave him his power ; and the dragon (the devil and Satan) to have given this power when he was cast down to the earth ; and we must then inquire when it was that the devil was not in the earth, or had not come down upon the earth ; and unless we can find a more recent period when Satan did not operate upon the hearts of men, we must go back at least to the period of the creation.

Our only course, therefore, here is, as it has been in other instances, to call to mind the declaration of the mighty angels, Rev. x. 6, *that there should be time no longer*. These forty-two months, accordingly, we suppose to be not a measure of duration, but a standard of parallelisms, showing us the action of the beast during the whole of his operation to be correlative, simultaneous, and interchangeable with the actions of all of the other series of figures of the same measure. The beast has the power to act in consequence of the treading of the holy city by the Gentiles, of the prophesying of the witnesses *in sackcloth*, of the spiritless state of their bodies, and of the seclusion of the woman in the wilderness.

§ 303. ‘He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme,’ &c.—The nature of this blasphemy in general we have already considered; something in effect equivalent to a proud and vain assumption of equality with God, especially as the efficient cause and author of eternal life. There appears besides to be three subdivisions of this blasphemy:—first, against the name of God; second, against the tabernacle of God; and third, against the dwellers in heaven.

‘His name.’—As the opening of the mouth, here mentioned, is not to be taken in a literal sense, so neither is the blasphemy against the *name* of the Most High to be supposed to consist literally in an act of speech:—it is something *virtually* equivalent to blasphemy. To blaspheme the name of God, accordingly, must be something else than literal profanity, or what is *commonly* called the taking of God’s name in vain. The glory of God’s name consists especially in this, that his righteousness is the efficient cause of the sinner’s salvation: his name prevails in this matter, not the name of the sinner; or, which is the same thing, the name of Christ, God manifest in the flesh, prevails. To blaspheme the name of God is to deny to his name the glory due for the work of redemption; to give that glory to the creature which belongs to the Creator. A system of salvation representing the glory of the sinner’s salvation to be due to himself, is a system that exalts the name of the sinner in opposition to that of the Saviour. Corresponding with this view, we find the reason given by God himself for publishing the glad tidings of peace is, that *his name* may be known; and this because that name had been every day blasphemed, (Is. lii. 5–7.) The plan of salvation alluded to in this prediction, is published to counteract a blasphemy of the name of Jehovah. So we suppose this blasphemy of the name of God, by the beast, to be something opposed to the exhibition of salvation by *grace*; that salvation by which only the name of God is honoured.

‘His tabernacle.’—To blaspheme the *tabernacle* of God must be something nearly of the same import; a tabernacle being a covering, or shelter, or refuge. Jesus Christ is called a minister of the true tabernacle, Heb. viii. 2. The true tabernacle, or shelter, is that imputed righteousness by which alone the disciple can be protected from the wrath to come: “For we (says Paul) that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we should be unclothed; but clothed upon;” that is, “with our house (shelter) which is from heaven.” To blaspheme the tabernacle of God is to set a naught this provision of imputed righteousness; to make the righteousness of man a substitute for it, exalting *this* tabernacle, as Paul calls it, above the tabernacle of God; and such we suppose to be the tendency or spirit of this blasphemous principle, represented by the ten-horned beast.

‘Them that dwell in heaven.’—It will be perceived from the Greek



that the idea of the tabernacle is to be preserved. Under this head, also, the blasphemy of the beast was directed against the *name* of God, against his *tabernacle*, and against those *tabernacling* in heaven: those that dwell or tabernacle in heaven being opposites of the dwellers upon earth. As such, those that tabernacle in heaven are such as belong to the tabernacle of God. We suppose the tabernacle itself to be the shelter provided for the sinner—Christ, or the righteousness of Christ; and those that tabernacle in heaven to be corresponding principles (personified), truths, and doctrinal elements connected with the distinguishing doctrine of imputed righteousness; as we have before supposed heaven to be a display of the divine counsels, or a spiritual exhibition of the divine purposes, in opposition to the earthly or literal exhibition. The blasphemy of the beast, under this head, is exhibited in denying to the name of God the glory due for man's salvation, in rejecting his imputed righteousness as a means of that salvation, and in scoffing at all the doctrines or principles connected with such a view of the plan of man's redemption; the accuser setting at defiance the purposes of sovereign grace.

Vs. 7, 8. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ πόλεμον ποιῆσαι μετὰ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ νικῆσαι αὐτούς· καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἔξουσία ἐπὶ πᾶσαν φυλὴν καὶ λαὸν καὶ γλῶσσαν καὶ ἔθνος. Καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν αὐτὸν πάντες οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ὧν οὐ γέγραπται τὸ ὄνομα ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἁγίου τοῦ ἐσφαγμένου ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου.

§ 304. 'And it was given unto him to make war,' &c.—The dragon was wroth, it is said in the preceding chapter, and went to war with the remnant of the woman's seed. We now find this war carried on, not by the dragon in person, but by his vicegerent, the beast. The war is the same, and those against whom the war is made are the same; that is, the seed of the woman—the elements or principles of the economy of grace—holy ones, saints, or those set apart;—principles which, although perhaps to human understanding not forming part of that economy, are yet set apart in the divine mind with reference to it, and are eventually to be manifested as subservient to it, or as proceeding from it, in conformity with what we have before considered the strict meaning of the term *holy*, or *saint*, or any person or thing sanctified, (§ 88.) The terms servants and saints we consider different appellations of the same thing; the servant being the person or principle which really and directly serves God, and the saint, or holy one, being the person or principle *set apart* in the divine mind for this real and direct service.

'And to overcome them.'—That is, we may presume, for the period of the predominance of this power. The evil principle represented by the

beast, armed as he is with all the power of the law, is permitted for a period to overcome the principles of the economy of grace; not the economy itself, for that is in a position of safety, beyond the reach of the power of the beast; but all other principles or doctrines of salvation, although really belonging and pertaining to that economy, are for a time permitted, on earth, or in an earthly view, to appear subservient to the system or kingdom of the beast. So we have seen the beast from the bottomless pit permitted to make war against the two witnesses, and to overcome and to kill them, which we have supposed to be equivalent to the present overcoming of the *saints*; the two witnesses representing the whole multitude of the saints, as the Old and New Testaments represent the whole multitude of truths and doctrines contained in them.

‘And power was given him over all kindreds, tongues, and nations.’—“Thou couldst have no power,” said Jesus to Pilate, “except it were given thee from on high.” So the power given to the Beast is from God, and given to fulfil His purposes. The original of the word *kindreds* is rendered elsewhere *tribes*—tribes of the earth; probably the same as those mentioned Matt. xxix. 30, kindreds, tongues, and nations. There is a pleonasm of expression here, seemingly furnishing us with a hint that these terms are not to be taken in a literal sense, either one of them being sufficient to designate all the inhabitants of the earth in such a sense. Taken together, they represent powers of the earth as opposites of heavenly powers: powers of salvation of the earthly system, as opposites of those of the heavenly system; and, together or separate, they may be intended to direct our attention to other portions of Scripture, where they are symbolically employed in such a manner as to throw light upon their meaning here. These earthly powers are subservient to the beast;—not as the saints just mentioned, conquered or overcome and brought into subjection for a time, but as the proper subjects of his realm; excepting always, as we may suppose, the one hundred and forty-four thousand of the sealed ones before spoken of as to be exempted from the desolations of the earth, Rev. vii. 3.

§ 305. ‘And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him,’ &c.—That is, all the opposites of the dwellers in heaven—all the elements of the earthly system, inhabitants of the earth, shall be subservient to him; excepting again, *those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life*, another figure of the one hundred and forty-four thousand. This book of life, as we have already had occasion to notice, is not literally a book or schedule of the names of human beings, the subjects of salvation; we suppose it to be something equivalent to the plan of salvation, or the covenant of grace. So those, whose names are said to be written in it, are the principles or elements of truth belonging to this plan or covenant; these ele-

ments of truth being found in the earthly system, as the pure metal is found in the ore mingled with dross and foreign substances ; or as the gold and silver will be found in the day of trial amidst wood, hay and stubble, when “ the fire shall try every man’s work, of what sort it is.” As in that day of manifestation, the foreign substances will be shown not to be of the precious material, so in the same final development, principles belonging exclusively to the earthly system will be manifested to be subservient to the beast. The same allusion is met with, Rev. xvii. 8, where it is said, “ They that dwell on the earth shall wonder, (*whose names were not written in the Book of Life* from the foundation of the world ;) which passage we suppose to be capable of the same construction as the present.

‘ From the foundation of the world.’—It is immaterial whether we render the expression, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, or the names written in the Book from the foundation of the world. It is evident that in either case the reference must be to the divine purpose which has been unchangeable from all eternity, and which is thus spoken of to adapt the expression to the ordinary apprehension of human minds.

It may be noticed here that the word rendered *world* in this verse, differs from that translated *world* in the third verse in our common version ; the term κόσμος (the world) being applicable to an order of things, while that of ἡ γῆ (the earth) expresses rather a position under a certain order of things.

Vs. 9, 10. If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity : he that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints :

Εἰ τις ἔχει οὖς, ἀκουσάτω. Εἰ τις αἰχμαλωσίαν σπύρει, εἰς αἰχμαλωσίαν ὑπάγει· εἰ τις ἐν μαχαίρᾳ ἀποκτενεῖ, διὰ αὐτὸν ἐν μαχαίρᾳ ἀποκτανθήσεται. ὧδέ ἐστὶν ἡ ὑπομονὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις τῶν ἁγίων.

§ 306. ‘ If any man have an ear,’ &c.—This is the same expression as that met with at the close of each of the addresses to the seven churches of Asia ; supposed to be designed (§ 46) to give a special caution against adopting the literal sense, or even taking the literal sense of the passage where it is found at all into view ; and so we consider it here. Not that other portions of the Apocalypse are more literal than this, but that there is more danger of taking this passage in a literal sense than there is of others : or rather, we should say, there is more danger of adopting the *temporal* sense, for it would be hardly possible to fall into the mistake of a *literal* construction. An animal, such as this beast is described to be could not be supposed to exist literally ; but what is next to this literal sense, is the application of this vision to temporal objects, (ecclesiastical or political affairs,) which is, in fact, a literal or *carnal* construction, as opposed to the spiritual sense. To guard against such a construction we may presume to



be the design of the caution here given: the necessity of it is but too evident from the experience of ages.\*

‘He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity.’—This denunciation we presume to apply here to the beast and his partisans. The word translated *leading* or *going* into captivity, signifies leading or going into bondage: *Ἀἰχμαλιζῶ*, *captivum abduco*; *vel*, *in captivitatem bello captum abduco*; *in servitutem abduco*, (Suiceri Lex.)—“I lead away into bondage the prisoner taken in war;” captivity and bondage, according to the custom of ancient warfare, being almost synonymous terms. We meet with the same expression Rom. vii. 23, “bringing me into captivity to the law of sin.” Better rendered, perhaps—bringing me into the state of bondage peculiar to the law of sin. The *law of sin* may be said to be that of ancient warfare—that the captive is entirely at the mercy of the captor. His life is forfeited, and if it be spared it is only that death is commuted for bondage. In allusion to which, Paul exclaims, in connexion with what he has just said of this *captivity*, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this *death*.” The law of sin is, the soul that sinneth it shall die. To be brought into captivity to this law of sin, is to be brought into this position of legal condemnation or death; a position from which the sinner can be delivered only by the redemption which is in Jesus Christ.

Those who advocate the principle of self-justification by one’s own fulfilment of the law, make themselves by their own system subject to the law; leading themselves into the position of bondage, or captivity, under the law or rule of sin. They choose to be justified by that law, and they teach that others are to be so. With what measure they mete, therefore, it is to be measured to them: they must be judged out of their own mouths, and according to the principles of their own system.

We suppose such to be the tendency of the self-righteous spirit or principle represented by the beast. His action is to bring his followers into this captivity; and we find, corresponding with the declaration of this pas-

\* No commentator of the Apocalypse pretends to render its meaning literally. A few passages perhaps excepted, it is universally considered a figurative composition. But the ordinary construction given to it is that of applying these figures to worldly or temporal objects. The beast, for example, has been supposed by some to represent the Roman emperor Nero; (vid. Calmet, art. Antichrist;) by others, the Roman empire under Charlemagne. The ten horns by some are supposed to represent ten kings or governments, into which that empire was first divided, &c. This construction cannot be called *literal*, but it may be called *carnal*; this last being a term expressing apparently something equivalent either to literal or temporal; as 1 Cor. ix. 11, where it applies to what we call temporal things, as distinguished from spiritual things; and Rom. viii. 6, where it is used in the sense of *literal*. So we might say of the construction usually put upon this mystic composition; although not literal, it is *carnal*. There is in it the admission of a mystic sense, but the application of that sense is to worldly or temporal objects, whether secular or ecclesiastical.

sage, he is, in the issue, himself taken captive, and subjected to a condition represented by a state far worse even than that of bondage, or of death itself, (Rev. xix. 20.)

The same term in the original is found Eph. iv. 8, in allusion to the triumph of Christ over the power of the law, and the consequent gift or grace of salvation: "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive:"—He captured, bound, or overcome the bondage of captivity—*ἡχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν*. So it is said, 2 Tim. iii. 5, 6, of certain teachers of false doctrines, or of the doctrines themselves—"having the form of godliness, (or piety,) but denying the power thereof"—that they creep into houses, and lead into the *bondage of captivity* silly women\* laden with sins: probably a figurative expression for the influence of legal views upon those who, *weak* in faith, and feeling the burden of their sins, are seeking to work out a righteousness of their own; on which account they are the more easily led to adopt principles placing them in the position of this bondage.

§ 307. 'He that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword.'—The sword is a scriptural figure, of a twofold character. In one sense, the sword is that of the Spirit, which is the word of God; in another, it is the sword of the magistrate—the instrument of vindictive justice. We must judge of the construction by the manner in which the figure is employed. Here it is evidently employed as the sword of the magistrate—the sword of vengeance—an instrument of wrath against which the sinner has no defence but that of the shield of faith; a weapon terrible to the unbeliever, but one which cannot separate the faithful follower from the love of Christ, Rom. viii. 35.

"They that take the sword, shall perish with the sword," Matt. xxvi. 52. This is an axiom undeniable in a natural sense; but we suppose the application in the Apocalypse to be especially spiritual, and the construction to be similar to that given to the figure with which it is connected. Even here, however, both swords may be alluded to. The sword of the beast, or the weapon of *his* warfare, is not the sword of the Spirit; it is something corresponding with the power of his ten horns; it is a legal sword, the instrument of the magistrate—the weapon of vindictive justice. On the other hand, we find this beast at the end of his career to be overcome and taken by the WORD, out of whose mouth went a sharp sword; which SWORD is evidently that of the Spirit, Rev. xix. 15, 19, and 20. Those

\* The word translated *silly women*, is merely a diminutive of womankind, and is apparently applicable not to a few weak women, in a literal sense, but to something represented by persons of this character, "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth;" the truth as it is in Jesus; the truth of salvation by sovereign grace.

who advocate the legal principles of vengeance, must be themselves judged by those legal principles. Doctrines advocating these principles must also be judged by the same. A system of self-righteousness sustaining itself by such legal principles, on the same principles will be proved to be void—incapable of *giving life*—Gal. iii. 21, “For if there had been a law given which could have *given life*, verily righteousness should have been by the law.” As this process, however, is effected by the word of God—the sword of the Spirit—the result is the same. He that killeth with the sword, is killed with the sword: and even here the sword of the Spirit may be as the sword of the magistrate, when exercised against erroneous doctrines or principles.

‘Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.’—Perhaps we may say, here is matter for consideration, capable of affording faith and patience; as if in allusion to the inquiry of the souls under the altar, Rev. vi. 10: “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” The dwellers on, or elements of, the earth are supposed to conspire and to co-operate with the beast in depriving the principles and doctrines of truth of their spiritual and proper sense. The advocates of the truth, or the principles of truth personified as such, are supposed, like Lot in the midst of Sodom, 2 Pet. ii. 7, 8, to be vexed in beholding the prevalence of these self-righteous and anti-evangelical doctrines. In the anguish of their minds they exclaim, How long, O Lord, will these errors be permitted? In reply, they are assured that the errors themselves carry with them, and in them, the elements of their own destruction: they have led *captive*, they will on their own principles be brought into captivity—they have taken the *sword*, they will perish by the sword. Here is wherewith to sustain faith and patience; as if it were said, Be assured falsehood itself is designed to work out the development of the truth. The period and process of this manifestation is certain and sure; therefore, “Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him,” Ps. xxxvii. 7; or, as it is expressed by Paul, (2 Thess. iii. 5,) “And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.”

### *The Beast from the Earth.*

V. 11. And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

Καὶ εἶδον ἄλλο θηρίον ἀναβαῖνον ἐκ τῆς γῆς, καὶ εἶχε κερᾶτα δύο ὅμοια ἀρνίῳ καὶ ἐλάλει ὡς δράκων.

§ 303. ‘And I beheld another beast.’—The apostle still retains his position upon the sand of the sea. The scene is unchanged, another object only makes its appearance in the midst of the same scenery; or rather,



another object attracts the attention of the spectator; for we may suppose both beasts to have been present at the same time, although the apostle completes his account of the rise and power of one before he commences upon that of the other. The two animals coexist from the beginning of their career, as we shall find they co-operate and finally perish by the same miserable end.

‘Coming up out of the earth;’—*ἀναβαῖνον*, coming up, the same word precisely as that rendered *rise up* in the first verse of the chapter. The idea to be associated with it we apprehend being also the same, viz., that of a continual coming up of this element from the system or mystery symbolically termed the earth. The earth we suppose to be a system of self-dependence, founded in a literal interpretation of the language of revelation; a system of faith, placing man in the position peculiar to his state by *nature* as opposed to his state by *grace*. This system, wherever it prevails, and as long as it prevails, sends forth an element represented here as a beast, *θηρίον*, an unclean and a destructive animal.

‘And he had two horns like a lamb.’—That is, as a lamb has two horns, so this beast has the same; a male lamb no doubt being the one in contemplation. And if we choose to render the Greek by the definite article, as if it were understood, which occurs frequently in other passages, the reading would be, he had two horns like *the* lamb; that is, like the Lamb of God—the Lamb afterwards said to be seen standing on Mount Zion. So far we may suppose this spurious lamb to affect to be a representative of the real lamb. He resembles the real lamb, however, only in having two horns; these horns perhaps resembling also those of a lamb, in other characteristics beside that of their number.

‘And he spake as a dragon;’—or, if we suppose the definite article to be understood, he spake as *the* dragon. The language of the first beast was that of a vain boaster, speaking great things and blasphemies; the language of the second beast is that of the accuser of the brethren, who accused them before God day and night. He is not the accuser himself, nor does he profess to be so; no doubt he assumes a very lamb-like character; but his language is in effect that of an accuser. He may pretend to be on the side of the mediator or intercessor, but he virtually and really argues for the prosecution: a character alluded to, Ps. l. 19, 20, “Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. Thou sittest (in judgment) and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother’s son.”

This beast is not mentioned under the same appellation in any portion of the revelation subsequent to the close of this chapter; but by comparing what is said of him here, especially in the next two verses, with Rev. xvi. 13, and xix. 20, we feel fully warranted in identifying him with the *false*

*prophet* of those two passages. And according to the definition before given of the term prophet, (§ 69,) viz., an interpreter, we assume the beast with two horns to be a false interpreter, or rather a false interpretation or standard of interpretation of the language of revelation—a false mode of interpreting—a misconstruction of the sense and meaning of the revealed word of God: a mode of interpretation arising from the self-righteous system represented by the *earth*; and which itself depends upon a literal or carnal construction of the sacred Scriptures.

The *horns* of this animal we suppose to represent the false prophet's powers (instruments) of perverting the sense of revelation; that is, the leading doctrines upon which he depends for his misrepresentation of gospel meaning. The appearance of the beast, as a lamb, indicates the *apparent* tendency of this misinterpretation to sustain the propitiatory views of the gospel plan; and if we suppose its two horns to be in appearance like those of a lamb, although not really such, we may suppose the two doctrines by which it effects its purpose of misconstruction to have the *appearance* of evangelical or gospel doctrines, although in reality something very diverse; or, if once such, so changed in their nature by misapplication as to become the converse of the power of a vicarious or propitiatory scheme of redemption: the signs of an element of atoning sacrifice becoming the indications of an element of destruction; as the horns of a lamb transplanted to the head of a wild beast would thenceforth become the weapons of a ferocious animal. Corresponding with this, while the *earthborn beast* wears the insignia of peace and reconciliation, his speech or doctrine is that of accusation; as we might suppose a certain mode of interpreting Scripture to carry with it, and to be sustained by, two doctrines bearing the appearance of gospel doctrines, while the system of faith to which they belong is really calculated by the aid of these doctrines only to enforce the law with its utmost rigour, leaving the sinner as much without the hope of salvation as if no plan of redeeming mercy had existed. We should say of such doctrines, that although they wore the appearance of powers of salvation, they were virtually and in effect powers of condemnation.

V. 12. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

Καὶ τὴν ἐξουσίαν τοῦ πρώτου θηρίου  
πᾶσαν ποιεῖ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ· καὶ ποιεῖ τὴν  
γῆν καὶ τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ κατοικοῦντας ἵνα προσ-  
κυνήσωσι τὸ θῆριον τὸ πρῶτον, ὃν ἔθερα-  
πέυθη ἡ πληγὴ τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ.

§ 309. 'And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast.'—The power of the first beast was represented by his ten horns, being the same horns as those of the dragon; and these ten horns we suppose to represent the law, as a whole. The power of the first beast was also a transmitted power, having been bestowed by the dragon. It was in effect the power of

the accuser of the brethren ; all which power is put into operation by this second beast. This false prophet (false interpretation personified) sustains his perversion of divine revelation by appealing to the law ; by professing to enforce the law on the ground that it has not been fulfilled by Christ, and consequently is yet to be fulfilled by man. The first beast receives the law from the accuser, and uses it as the constitution of his government ; the second beast acts under the authority of this law, and places himself in the stead of the accuser, acting as proxy for the public prosecutor ; in doing which he employs his own two horns or powers as the elements of his argument. As we may suppose, by way of illustration, a controversialist professing to advocate the gospel view of God's plan of salvation, through the atoning sacrifice of Christ, so arguing his case as to leave the sinner more than ever, if possible, in the position of condemnation. He admits the law to have been fulfilled and satisfied by a *divine surety* ; but in order to maintain, as he supposes requisite, the perpetual authority of the law, he brings forward two leading doctrines of the gospel ; by which, through his misinterpretation, he makes it virtually to appear that, notwithstanding the redemption wrought out by the Son of God, a perfect fulfilment of the law on the part of the disciple, (a work to be wrought by his own conduct and actions,) is still the condition of eternal salvation. Here the second beast uses all the power of the first beast, which is in effect the power of the accuser or dragon, through the instrumentality of his two horns—two doctrines of the gospel, either perverted in their character and features, or misapplied in the use for which they were designed.

‘ Before him ;’—ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, in presence of—not *before* in point of time. The second beast exercises all this power in the presence of the first beast ; that is, with his consent, concurrence, and approbation ; as a prime minister, acting under authority of his master, may be said to exercise the sovereign power in the presence of the sovereign himself. In fact we may take all that is supposed to be done in the first part of the chapter by the first beast, to be done through the instrumentality of the second beast ; the last coexisting and co-operating with the first, as we have before remarked. So an historian may first state in general terms what was done by a certain temporal monarch during his reign, and then give an account of the character and management of the prime minister through whom these things were done. In reading this account of the second beast, therefore, we must carry our minds back to the account given of the first ; and when it is said that all the world wondered after the beast, we may conclude that this general admiration of the sovereign ruler was brought about in a great measure by the artifices of the *premier*.

‘ And causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast.’—This is a confirmation of the idea just enlarged upon. In the fourth



verse it is said, they worshipped the beast, saying, &c. ; and here in the twelfth verse we are told that it is through the second beast that this worship is brought about ; that is, we suppose the use made in the misinterpretation represented by this lamb-like beast of the two doctrines, symbolized by his horns, to be such as virtually to cause a worship and service of the element represented by the first beast.

‘ Whose deadly wound was healed ; ’—or, of whom was healed the stroke of his death. In the first mention of this wound it appeared as if only one of the heads of the animal had been slain, leaving the beast alive ; but here it appears that this slaying of one of the heads was a stroke of death to the beast, so that the whole animal had the appearance of having been dead, and of being again alive. As the principle of self-justification, or self-propitiation, may be said to have been alive in the first instance, under the legal dispensation ; to be dead on the coming in of the gospel economy, and to be alive again when that economy is so perverted as to render it a legal system.

This last change in the ten-horned beast may be supposed to have been brought about through the operation of the two-horned power of the second beast ; this apparent exercise of power being a portion of the wonder-working ability displayed by the false prophet.

Vs. 13, 14. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men ; and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by (the means of) those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast ; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

Καὶ ποιεῖ σημεῖα μεγάλα, ἵνα καὶ πῦρ ποιῇ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβαίνειν εἰς τὴν γῆν ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀνθρώπων. Καὶ πλανᾷ τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς διὰ τὰ σημεῖα, ἃ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ποιῆσαι ἐνώπιον τοῦ θηρίου, λέγων τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ποιῆσαι εἰκόνα τῷ θηρίῳ, ὃ ἔχει τὴν πληγὴν τῆς μαχαίρας καὶ ἔζησε.

§ 310. ‘ And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire,’ &c.—That is, *in the sight of men* he doeth great wonders ; the making fire to come down from heaven being one of these wonders. He is a deceiver or false interpreter of the divine will ; he brings forward these signs in testimony of the correctness of his interpretations : but the signs, as well as the interpretations, are false. They appear to human apprehension to be signs and wonders, but they are not really such ; neither is the fire really *heavenly* fire, nor does it really come down from heaven ; but in the sight of men it appears to be what it is given forth to be ;—as it was predicted, Matt. xxiv. 24, “ For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders ; inasmuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”

Fire is the symbol of the element of trial. The revealed Word of God is the true fire by which every work or doctrine is to be tried ; heaven

being the system of divine government as exhibited in the Scriptures. Out of these Scriptures the false prophet brings the revealed word to prove the correctness of the earthly system ; that is, to human apprehension he does this, or rather, to the literal or carnal apprehension this appears to be done. Taking Scripture in its literal sense, passages may be quoted sustaining apparently the delusive mode of interpretation, represented by the false prophet or two horned-beast ; and supporting the system or view of man's position under the law, figuratively spoken of as the earth.

‘ And he deceiveth them that dwell on the earth,’ *Kaì πλανᾷ*, and *leadeth astray*.—The elements of the earthly system are perverted by this false interpretation of Scripture. They are made to lead away from the truth : something of the character of the perversion of the right ways of the Lord, charged upon the sorcerer, (Acts xiii. 10.)

§ 311. ‘ Saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image,’ &c.—The tendency of the false interpretation, represented by this second beast, is such as to cause the elements of the earthly system to sustain a view of religious faith, equivalent in effect to the erection of an image to the principle figuratively spoken of as the beast. Not that the image and the beast are two different objects of worship, but that the beast is worshipped in its image.

From the account we have of the image set up by the king of Babylon in the plain of Dura, we cannot but suppose that the worship of the image was in effect a worship of the king. Nebuchadnezzar did not intend to divert the homage of his people from himself, but he aimed at receiving divine honours through the instrumentality of this image ; the erection of which may be called a royal contrivance for deifying the monarch, without an absolute pretension on his part to the character of a divinity. We read, indeed, of sovereigns of later times mad enough to make such pretensions openly, giving themselves out as descendants of the gods ; as themselves demi-gods, and even gods ; and when the admonitions of mortality have convinced the more thinking part of them of the folly of such pretensions, they have indemnified themselves in this particular by making provision for their own apotheosis after death. But Nebuchadnezzar appears to have been an intellectual, thinking monarch, as well as an ambitious and powerful one ; and he was probably too well imbued with a knowledge of the true God, derived from his Hebrew captives, not to be convinced of the madness and even impiety of assuming to be himself an object of religious worship ; but the same feeling, which would otherwise have prompted him to such an assumption, easily led him to gratify his desire of adoration, by requiring it indirectly from his people ; as if one, not himself a deity, could make a deity for others. Even the ministers and flatterers of the Babylonish monarch would not venture, we may suppose, upon such an excess of

sycophancy, as to suggest his setting himself up as an object of worship ; but they appear to have fallen readily in with his vain imagination, in maintaining this right and power to create such an object of worship, and the reasonableness of the requisition in behalf of his idol, that it should be adored by his subjects.

Something like this may be found in the heart of man, even in the most enlightened portions of Christendom. Common sense, common experience, is sufficient to convince any human being of ordinary understanding of the folly of setting one's *self* up as an object of worship ; of placing one's self in the position of Deity. The idea is revolting, and repugnant even to our ordinary sentiments of propriety ; how much more must it be so to those enjoying a knowledge of revealed truth, and professing to be actuated by its precepts ! What the Christian disciple would not do, however, directly, he may do indirectly ; and a folly which he could not be persuaded to commit avowedly, he may be *led away* to commit, or may be deluded into committing virtually and in effect.

We have already more than once intimated that there is such a worship as that of *self* ;—that the worship of God is the service of God ; that this service or worship must be characterized by the motive of conduct or action ; and that if even our best actions proceed from a motive of benefiting ourselves, it is *self* that we are *serving*, and not God. So we have noticed that if, by any merits of our own, we justify ourselves,—save ourselves from eternal punishment, and obtain for ourselves eternal happiness,—we then become our own saviours. Accordingly, he who pretends to have accomplished such a work puts himself in the place of God, making himself the object of his own grateful adoration for this work of redemption : placing himself in such a position that, as in the first instance he acted from no motive but that of benefiting or serving himself, so subsequently his only motive even for eternity must be that of gratitude, or love to himself : thus constituting his own *self* the object of his love, and worship, and service, both in this life and in the next.

There is scarcely any one professing the Christian name, who would openly and avowedly make such a pretension as this. There is scarcely any Christian disciple of ordinary intelligence who would not reject with abhorrence and disgust an interpretation of the Scriptures, directly inculcating such an extreme of *self-worship*.

But while the direct and avowed error is easily detected, and instantly repudiated, there is an indirect mode by which the disciple may be deluded or led away into precisely this species of idolatry. A false interpretation, or misconstruction of the language of revelation, leads him into the belief that he is to work out his salvation by an intrinsic holiness, perfection, and goodness of his own ; causing him in effect to create an *image of his own*



*righteousness*, to which he virtually bows down as to an object of adoration, considering it the source of all his hopes, for time and for eternity. In this *image* of his own perfection, his own *self* is the real deity; he has not two objects of worship,—one is represented in the other,—*self* is worshipped in the image of its own merits.

‘The heart is deceitful above all things.’—A delusion such as we have here depicted finds, therefore, a ready reception; but the immediate cause of the error is the false interpretation, *leading astray* or perverting the language of revelation; causing the elements of the earthly system, or plan of salvation, as drawn from a literal or *carnal* view of the written word, to substitute an image of human fabric for the true object of worship—the Creator and Redeemer of the world.

§ 312. The action of the second beast is to place the worshipper (the elements of the earthly system spoken of as worshippers) under the dominion of the first beast, whose ten horns, or legal powers, are the instruments of enforcing his authority. It is the misinterpretation of the false prophet which places the disciple under the dominion of self, and puts him in the position of a worshipper of self, and consequently brings him back from his position of freedom in Christ to a state of bondage under the law.

So the first beast is represented as making war upon the saints: a war probably of the same kind as that carried on in heaven between Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels; with this difference, that the war in heaven is a contest between the elements of redemption and those of accusation. The war on earth is between the true elements of redemption on the one side, and the elements of falsehood, of self-justification, and of self-propitiation, on the other.\* The latter war, although said to be made by the first beast, is in fact carried on by the second beast; the false prophet (misinterpretation) leading the elements of falsehood just spoken of to contend with those of truth, figuratively spoken of as the saints, or holy ones. This spirit of misinterpretation, ostensibly evangelical, and bearing the insignia of propitiatory power, comes from the *earth*: a literal and self-righteous origin. Its tendency is to bring into operation the whole power of the law, and, like the *letter which killeth*, to destroy the opposite elements of grace, by re-establishing the dominion resulting from the power of condemnation.

Such is the action of the second beast; but this action is through the instrumentality of his two horns, or powers, the weapons of his warfare—carnal weapons—the opposites of those of which the apostle speaks, as

\* The war in heaven may be considered equivalent to the contest in the nature of things between the elements of justice and those of mercy, figuratively represented as a division in the councils of the Most High; the war on earth is equivalent to a manifestation of truth resulting from this heavenly contest.

mighty to the pulling down of strong holds, (2 Cor. x. 4.) Such is the misinterpretation we may also say of the false prophet; which misinterpretation is effected, or put into operation, and made efficient, by the instrumentality of two doctrinal powers, or weapons; two leading doctrines, bearing the appearance of something evangelical; professing to advocate, no doubt, a system of atonement or propitiation, but in reality wresting the meaning of the sacred oracles in a manner to deceive even the very elect, (Matt. xxiv. 24.) The disciple, carried away by this misinterpretation, operating as it does by the means of these two doctrines, being led not only to worship, or serve something opposed to God, (self,) but also to form in his own mind or heart an image of the moral perfection of *self*; which image, according to his system, he actually adores without being conscious of it. Such, indeed, is the effect; but we suppose here, as elsewhere, the immediate design of the Apocalypse to be, that of pointing out and illustrating the end to be repudiated, not that of designating literally a class of human beings eventually to suffer from it.

Nothing is said of the time allotted to the action of the second beast, but we take the term of *forty-two months* (verse 5) to be equally applicable to the predominant influence of both of these monsters; the last co-operating with the first, or rather the first acting in, and manifesting itself in the last, from the beginning to the end of his career. The several operations of the beast from the sea, described in the first part of the chapter, are effected by the agency of the beast from the earth. The particulars related of both beasts, although described successively, are in fact coeval; the requisition of the work set forth in the seventeenth verse of the chapter, all being of as early a date, so to speak, as the worship of the dragon and of the beast, adverted to in the fourth verse; and this worship, as well as the overcoming of the saints, and the subjugation of the dwellers upon the earth, being the result of the intervention of the false interpreter, with his signs and lying wonders, exhibited through the instrumentality of his two important, most prominent, and leading doctrinal powers.

‘Which had the wound by a sword, and did live,’—or, as it is in the Greek, by *the sword*. The first beast is mentioned in the third verse as having one of his heads wounded to death. In the twelfth verse he is spoken of as one whose deadly wound was healed; and here, in the fourteenth verse, as the beast which had the wound by *the sword* and did live. There seems to be a gradual development in the character of this wound. The animal appears at first as having been wounded only in one of its members—a wound deadly indeed to that member, but not so to the whole beast; next, his wound seems to be alluded to as altogether mortal,—a deadly wound of the beast itself; and lastly, we are informed by what in-

strumentality the wound had been inflicted, viz., by *the sword*. This sword, according to our previous interpretation of the symbol, we suppose to represent the revealed Word of God, spiritually understood—the sword of the Spirit: the sword of the magistrate, when employed for the destruction of error; that of the warrior, when engaged directly in the defence or promulgation of the truth.

Having supposed (by way of approximation) the beast from the sea to represent the element of *self*, or something of that kind, we suppose this element to be contemplated as having been alive under the legal dispensation; *self* being then supposed to depend upon its own strength for the means of eternal life. Under the gospel dispensation it receives a mortal wound—a wound manifestly effected by the revealed word, properly understood. Wherever this word is so understood, there the beast (self) is wounded to death—manifested to be without life;—that is, without the means of eternal life. Where this word, on the contrary, is not rightly understood, or where the Scriptures are taken literally, (carnally,) under a false construction, there the beast is alive again; self-righteousness being then contemplated as the element of eternal life. So, in a system of doctrine, according to which the disciple is supposed capable of satisfying the requisites of the law by merits or by works of his own, the element of self-justification prevails in full power; the *sword of the Spirit* only being able to destroy the error.

V. 15. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

Καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ δοῦναι πνεῦμα τῇ εἰκόνι τοῦ θηρίου, ἵνα καὶ λαλήσῃ ἡ εἰκὼν τοῦ θηρίου, καὶ ποιήσῃ, ὅσοι ἂν μὴ προσκυνήσωσι τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ θηρίου ἵνα ἀποκτανθῶσι.

§ 312. ‘And he had power;’—or, it was given him to give life, or rather to give *spirit* unto the image. The word translated *life* here, (πνεῦμα,) is the same as that rendered spirit, as opposed to the letter, (τὸ γράμμα,) 2 Cor. iii. 6; and in its adverbial form, spiritually, (πνευματικῶς,) Rev. xi. 8, it is to be distinguished from the term ζωή, properly rendered life, John i. 4, and v. 26. The false prophet, or false interpreter, had power given him, (this office was assigned to him,) to cause the image of the beast to appear to have been created in accordance with the spiritual sense of Scripture, and to appear to speak the spiritual sense; appearing to have life in itself—that is, appearing to possess in itself the means of eternal life. As we may suppose the advocates of self-righteous views to claim for these views a certain refinement of ethics, to which they apply the appellation of spirituality, or perhaps of spiritual mindedness; the appellation, nevertheless, being misapplied, and the views being in reality the dictate of the letter, and not of the spirit. This appearance is a part of the



deception practised by the false prophet, and so practised we may presume through the instrumentality of his two *horns*, or doctrinal powers, for he is not represented as possessed of any other weapons or instruments. By this delusion he causes all principles of faith or doctrine opposed to the service of the beast, or not tending to exalt the beast as an object of worship, to appear as *dead works*: figuratively speaking, he causes them to be *killed*—to appear to be void of spirituality, and inconsistent with the means of eternal life; the action of the false prophet upon the elements of true doctrine, being *an opposite* of that of the sword of the Spirit upon the wounded head of the first beast. As when Moses, the true prophet, the true interpreter of the will of God, performed certain real miracles in the presence of the king of Egypt, the magicians of the king (the false prophets) professed to perform precisely similar miracles; it being *given to them* to delude the monarch and his court, that their hearts might be hardened, and that the purpose of God might be fulfilled.

The first *monster* gives himself out as in the place of God; or is made to appear as God, through the instrumentality of the second beast. The image of this *monster* we suppose to be the opposite of him who is declared to be the image of God, 2 Cor. iv. 4; the image of the invisible God, Col. i. 15; and the brightness of the glory, and the express image of the person of God, Heb. i. 3. We may define the image of God, spiritually, to be his *righteousness*, personified in Jesus Christ; in whom dwelt all the fulness (perfection) of the Godhead bodily. On this account, while the disciple is said to bear the image of Christ, 1 Cor. xv. 49, being clothed *by imputation* with the moral perfection or righteousness of his Redeemer, he is also said to be conformed to the image of this image of God. The disciple thus, *in and through Christ*, being contemplated as clothed even with the righteousness of God himself—Jehovah our righteousness.

The image of the beast, to be the opposite of this divine perfection, must be the righteousness or pretended perfection of man—the righteousness of *self*; a conclusion similar to that before reached (§ 310) by a different process. To give life to this image is accordingly to cause this human righteousness to appear to be spiritually the image of God and not of man; in other words, it is to cause the pretended moral perfection of man to be substituted for the real perfection of God. The false prophet, assuming this to be the just interpretation of the written word of revelation, causes all elements of doctrine not subservient to the worship of this image of man's righteousness, to be denounced as inconsistent with the means of eternal life. In like manner, perhaps, the *speaking* of the image of the beast may be defined to be what might be termed a *speaking* for itself; the false interpretation placing this element of self-righteousness in such a plausible

aspect as to cause it to argue as it were for the reasonableness of its own claims.

This false interpretation, in effect, causes the opposing elements to be *killed*, but it is through the agency of the image that it does this; and the effect produced is a result apparently of the appearance of life or of spirituality given to the image. It is given to the false prophet to give spirit to the image of the beast, in order that the image should both speak and cause that the subsequent idolatrous requisitions may appear as of the image and not of the prophet.\* Self-righteousness (the image) under the sanction of professed spirituality, arguing its own cause, virtually revives the operation of the *law*, and thus causes the death, that is, the *temporary deadness*, of the elements of the gospel—we do not say *destruction*, because the terms destroy and destroyed imply annihilation. The elements of truth cannot be annihilated; so, those opposed to the worship of the image, although killed, may be presumed to be subsequently resuscitated. The speaking of the beast, its apparent spirituality, and its action in killing, we are to remember are things taking place in the sight of men only, not in the sight of God.

Vs. 16, 17. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; and that no man [no one] might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Καὶ ποιεῖ πάντας, τοὺς μικροὺς καὶ τοὺς μεγάλους, καὶ τοὺς πλουσίους καὶ τοὺς πτωχοὺς, καὶ τοὺς ἐλευθέρους καὶ τοὺς δούλους, ἵνα δώσιν αὐτοῖς χάραγμα ἐπὶ τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῶν τῆς δεξιᾶς ἢ ἐπὶ τὸ μέτωπον αὐτῶν· καὶ ἵνα μὴ τις δύνηται ἄγοράσαι ἢ πωλῆσαι, εἰ μὴ ὁ ἔχων τὸ χάραγμα, τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θηρίου ἢ τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ.

§ 313. ‘And he causeth all,’ &c.;—or, and he *moveth* all. The Greek verb *ποιῶ* does not necessarily imply an external compulsion. In this, as well as in the twelfth verse, it is rendered in the Latin version of L. and G. by *moveo*. He moves the earth and its inhabitants that they should adore the first beast, so he *moves* them that a certain character or mark should be received by them. The influence of the false prophet, in causing the infliction of the mark, is something taking effect in the element itself, as by spontaneous action; the officious sycophancy of the subject under the delusion of the false interpreter leading to the ready performance of an act of servility, which the sovereign himself alone might be sup-

\* As if we might suppose the courtiers of Nebuchadnezzar to have persuaded their monarch, and the people of Babylon, that the golden image of his setting up, itself required the destruction of those refusing to worship it; thus shielding the barbarity of the contemplated persecution under the pretence of its being a requisition of the divinity.

posed hardly to have required: a degree of sycophancy generally the accompaniment of a mercenary and selfish motive of conduct.

‘Small and great, rich and poor,’ &c.—The enumeration of these different classes may be designed only to give intensity to the term *all*. Possibly the verse may admit of a further analysis, but it appears sufficient to take these specifications altogether as indicating the peculiarity that, *without exception*, every principle or element belonging to the kingdom, system, or mystery of the beast, must exhibit the characteristic feature alluded to; the influence producing this exhibition being in all cases that of the false prophet, *through the instrumentality of his two horns* or most prominent doctrines.

The term rendered *mark*, *χάρagma*, occurs in the New Testament only in the Apocalypse, and is not found at all in the Septuagint. The term *ζαχαριῶν*, which approaches nearest to it, coming also from the same root, is met with but once in the New Testament, Heb. i. 3, and once in the Septuagint, Lev. xiii. 28. In Hebrews, it is applied to Jesus Christ as the *character* or express image of the Deity. In Leviticus, it designates a mark (*cicatrix*) attendant upon a certain stage of leprosy. As the term from which both these words are derived primitively expressed the action of digging a trench around a camp, and was thence applied to the cutting or graving upon stone or metals, the leading idea to be associated with this mark is its almost indelible nature; at the same time we may presume it to be not merely an arbitrary mark, but some peculiar expression of the leading feature of the thing of which it bears the impression. It may be characteristic of the abject bondage peculiar to the kingdom of the beast, or of the blasphemy with which the principle of self is chargeable; or it may be some prominent feature of selfishness, or of want of gratitude to God, necessarily predominating in all the elements of the doctrinal system of this *spirit of error*.

We find, from the next chapter, that the one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed ones are seen standing with the Lamb upon the *Mount Zion*. This mount is part of the earth, and the one hundred and forty-four thousand were inhabitants of the earth at the time of their being sealed, but they cannot be amongst those who bear the mark of the beast. On the contrary, they have the name of the Father of the Lamb in their foreheads,—an opposite of the mark. They are exceptions to the general rule here, as they were before exempt from the action of the four angels, withholding the winds from blowing on the earth. The power and influence of the two beasts extends to all the dwellers upon the earth, but always with this exception.

The seal upon the foreheads of the chosen ones, we have supposed to be something bearing an analogy with the marks of the blood of the paschal



lamb upon the door-posts of the houses of the Israelites ; this blood being a figure of the atonement of Christ—a *memento* of his vicarious interposition. If this seal and the Father's name in the foreheads of the one hundred and forty-four thousand be identic, we may suppose these elements of truth to bear the impress of the *new name*, JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS ; a name having the same protecting quality as that ascribed to the evidence of the vicarious sufferings of the Redeemer. Both figures or marks representing the same truths—every element of doctrine exhibiting a tendency to inculcate a reliance upon the means of salvation represented by either of them, bears as upon its front the seal of its intimate connection with the plan of sovereign grace. On the other hand, we suppose the mark of the beast to be put for the leading feature of elements of doctrine, of precisely an opposite tendency ; the name of *the beast* being also an opposite of the *new name* just alluded to. Every element belonging to this system is to bear the mark in one or the other of these particulars.

‘ In their right hand, or in their foreheads.’—The mark in the *right hand* may be a characteristic of action or tendency. The mark in the forehead may be a mark of identity. The right hand of man may be taken as an opposite of the right hand of God ;—the right hand of God is his righteousness, (Is. xli. 10,) the power by which he saves.\* The right hand of man may be put for man's supposed or pretended righteousness. Every element of doctrine, accordingly, sustaining the principle of man's salvation by his own merit, bears upon it the mark of the beast. So, as the seal of the Father's *name* upon the foreheads of the one hundred and forty-four thousand exhibits the identity of the principles thus sealed with the divine word or purpose, *the name* (perhaps *self*) in the foreheads of the *subjects* of the beast, may be supposed to designate the identity of every selfish, and mercenary, and vainglorious principle, with the ruling element setting itself up in the heart of man in the place of Jehovah.

The subjects of the beast are marked in the right hand, as well as in the forehead ; the chosen ones of Jehovah are sealed only in their foreheads. Under the economy of *grace*, the disciple needs no other power than that of the right hand of his God and Saviour. If he have the mark of identity, or of adoption, it is all that is required. Under the economy of *works*, man depends upon his own right hand, as well as upon the character of his faith : as it is said, Ps. cxliv. 8, Their right hand (their professed means of deliverance) is a right hand of falsehood. In this state of dependence, we may suppose him to be met with the requisition of the false interpreter, that every element of doctrine belonging to the system of self-justification must bear, as on the right hand, the characteristic of self, self-love, or selfishness.

§ 314. ‘ And that no man (no one) might buy or sell.’—Here it is implied that buying and selling constitute the universal occupation of these

dwellers on the earth. All belonging to the kingdom of the beast, high and low, rich and poor, are engaged in *traffic*—all are actuated by the mercenary motive of getting gain. To cut them, or any of them, off from this privilege, is equivalent to depriving them of the rights of citizenship, and even of the means of sustaining life; still more of the means of accumulating riches either for purposes of ransom, for their immediate gratification, or for promoting their future glory. In like manner, under the influence of the false prophet, no doctrine is deemed efficient in pointing out the way of eternal life, and of entering into the glory of a future state, unless it bear the mark or stamp of this blasphemous principle in its avowed character, or in its virtual tendency.

We find nothing said of buying or selling, or getting gain, in connection with the New Jerusalem. There all avocations of toil or labour cease, and there (in the economy of grace) no mercenary motive of action finds a place. Babylon on the contrary, as we shall see hereafter, is distinguished for her commercial avocations; and that *great city* we suppose to be but another figure of the kingdom of this ten-horned beast. The dwellers upon the earth we take to be the elements of a system of which all the principles are of a mercenary character—making a gain of Godliness; every motive of obedience urged upon the disciple being grounded upon calculations of profit and loss, present or future. Consequently, every motive or principle, not bearing this mark of selfishness—not having the glory and interest of self in view—is virtually deprived of its *franchise* in this system, or kingdom, influenced, as the system is, by the mode of interpreting revelation adopted by, or rather represented by, the false prophet; this influence being part of the deception practised by the second beast, and the means by which from the beginning he causes the dwellers upon the earth to worship the first beast through the image of their own creation.

‘Save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.’—Here there appears to be three grades or classes of this peculiar characteristic of the beast: the *mark*, (*χράσμα*), the *name*, and the *number* of the name. Some editions of the Greek, however, omit the first disjunctive particle *ἢ*, (or,) so as to leave room to suppose the two last classes or grades to be in apposition to the first;—as if it were said, Save he that had the mark, that is, the name of the beast, or the number of his name; the mark comprehending the other two particulars. So, Rev. xiv. 9, the mark in the forehead or hand seems to be given for name and number, both or either; and Rev. xiv. 11, the mark of his name is spoken of as identifying name and mark. Again, Rev. xv. 2, the mark and the number of the name only are mentioned, leaving us to suppose the mark to be put for the name itself; while, Rev. xvi. 2, xix. 20, and xx. 4, the mark alone is mentioned, apparently, as equivalent to all three of the terms. Unless

we can find, therefore, some meaning for the mark distinct from that of the name, we should be inclined to think the first  $\eta$  (*or*), above alluded to, rightly omitted in the Greek edition from which we copy; the mark, name, and number, being but three ways of expressing the same characteristic, and neither of the terms being designed to be understood in a literal sense, any more than those of the *forehead* and *hand*. All of them apply to some remarkable characteristic of doctrinal elements, exhibiting, as soon as their true nature is exposed, the mark of the beast—the mark of something blasphemous in its pretensions, destructive in its tendency, and essentially *unclean* in the spiritual sense of the term.\*

Allusions to this name continue to be made, as we have noticed, as far as the twentieth chapter; we shall, therefore, have occasion hereafter to advert to it further. Meantime we may remark, that, as it is an opposite of the name *Jehovah*, we may also consider it an opposite of the name *Immanuel*, *God with us*, and equally an opposite of the name *Jesus*. Of the first it is said, Ps. cxlviii. 13, Let them praise the name of Jehovah; for his name *alone* is excellent. The false prophet's interpretation is, that the name of the *beast* is excellent. Of the second it is said, Is. ix. 6, It shall be called Wonderful, the Counsellor, &c.; whereas, according to the false prophet, the name of the *beast* is the wonderful, and mighty name. Of the *third* the apostle says, Col. iii. 17, Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. In the kingdom of the beast nothing is done but what pertains to buying and selling; the exaction of the false prophet is, therefore, equivalent to a requisition exactly counter to the injunction of the apostle Paul. The false interpreter, by the mark in the forehead or hand, requires every thing, *in word or deed*, to be done in the *name* of the beast. The follower of Jesus does every thing in the name of his master, that all the honour and glory of what is done may be ascribed to that master, that God in all things may be glorified. The subject of the beast, on the contrary, by the misconstruction of the false prophet, (through the instrumentality of his two doctrinal powers,) is prevailed upon to do all in

\* The leading idea to be associated with the Scripture term *unclean*, &c., is that of *mixture*, or adulteration. Doctrinal principles, systems of faith, modes of interpretation, Antichrist, and the spirit of error, are all, we apprehend, of this character of *adulteration*; corresponding with the definition of Suicerus of the Greek term applied to the misinterpretation of Jezebel, as well as to that of the contents of the harlot's cup, Rev. xvii. 4: *Πορτεία, propriè notat commixtionem eorum qui extra conjugium vivant*. We think it important to keep this discrimination in view, because the error represented by the crime is one chargeable not merely upon infidels, but rather upon professed disciples. It is not so much the vice of a skeptical as of an erroneous system of faith which possesses this peculiar character of impurity. Hence the anti-Christian elements depicted in this chapter, are both of them represented by animals Levitically *unclean* as well as naturally ferocious and destructive.



the name of *self*, that to his own *self* may be ascribed the glory and honour of what he is enabled to perform.

V. 18. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number (is) Six hundred three-score (and) six.

Ἦδε ἡ σοφία ἐστίν· ὁ ἔχων τοῦν ψηφισάτω τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ θηρίου· ἀριθμὸς γὰρ ἀνθρώπου ἐστὶ, καὶ ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτοῦ χξς'.

‘Here is wisdom.’—An intimation of a hidden or mystic meaning—something requiring a particular kind of wisdom to be understood; a wisdom peculiar to the subject—wisdom in a spiritual sense—the wisdom of God in a mystery—the hidden wisdom, spoken of by Paul, 1 Cor. ii. 6, 7, 8.

‘Let him that hath understanding.’—This understanding must be also of the same kind as the wisdom. An ability to discern the spiritual sense of revelation—the deep things of God, which it is said the Spirit searcheth. “Howbeit,” says Paul, “we speak wisdom among them that are perfect (in faith); yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world,” τῶν ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου. Not in the words, he adds, which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth. Not the didactics of human wisdom, but those of the Spirit—the spiritual understanding. The natural or physical man, he says, (the man that understands what is said of the mysteries of the gospel in an ordinary sense,) receives not—comprehends not—the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, (the ravings of madness:) neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned, (1 Cor. ii. 6–15.)

An allusion to a change of views in this particular seems to be made by the prophet, Is. xxix. 24: “They also that erred in spirit shall come to *understanding*, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.” So Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams, being able to give the hidden meaning from the external indication of it. Solomon also had a wise and an understanding heart, especially we think in reference to matters of religious doctrine; as the whole tenor of the Canticles, and a multitude of allusions in his proverbial sayings, might be brought to testify. Paul prays for the Ephesians, that the eyes of their understandings may be enlightened: and this, not in order that they may be converted to the Christian faith, but because they are already converted; and being now disciples and followers of Christ, it is desirable for them (as it is their privilege) to become acquainted with the *mysteries* of their faith. The same apostle’s prayer for the Colossians, also, was that they might be filled with the knowledge of the will of God in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, συνέσει πνευματικῇ, (Col. i. 9;) the word translated understanding signifying a *concurrence*, as of two streams running together, or as two persons may concur in seeing an object in the same light; and, as Paul expresses himself elsewhere, “We

have the mind of Christ: we contemplate matters of revelation in the light in which they are contemplated by him. Such we suppose to be the wisdom and understanding called for in the passage before us.

‘Count the number of the beast.’—The number no doubt spoken of in the preceding verse, as the number of the *name* of the beast. We find nothing like this number of a name, or of a beast or man in any other part of the sacred writings; neither do we find any thing to contrast with it as an opposite, unless it be the number one hundred and forty-four thousand of the sealed ones; the verb *ψηφίζω*, rendered *count*, occurring only in one other passage of the New Testament, where it is applied to calculating the cost of a building, Luke xiv. 28. The *verb* is not met with at all in the Septuagint. Its root, *ψηφος*, is the appellation of a small stone employed in balloting, Acts xxvi. 10: “I gave my voice (*κατίκτενα ψηφίον*, I brought forth a ballot) against them.” It is also employed in the appellation of the *white stone*, upon which the new name is written, and which may afford an example of a ballot, the opposite of that mentioned by Paul; the two examples reminding us of the white and black balls in use on some occasions in balloting at the present day. The term *ψηφος* is employed in the Septuagint, Eccl. vii. 25, where our common version renders it, standing in connection as it does with *wisdom*, by the *reason of things*. We find it nowhere else in the Septuagint, except Ex. iv. 25, where it is applied to a *stone* in the ordinary sense. Amongst the Greeks, the appellation *ψηφος* was given to a mode of divination with pebbles, properly called *θραιά*; and the art or practice of legerdemain with pebbles was termed *ψηφοποιξία*, and a practitioner in this art *ψηφοποικτής*, (vid. Donnegan’s Lex.) The derivative *ψηφισμα*, expresses in the Septuagint a decree of *fate*, the supposed result of the lot, פּוּר *pur*, cast by Haman,\* being thus the translation of a Persian term strictly *magical*, (פּוּר *nomen vox Persica*; *κλήρος*, *sors*; *χίψισμα*, *decretum*, Trommii Index Heb. et Chald.) The mode of divination above alluded to, having been probably borrowed from the practices of the Eastern magi or astrologers, whence the pretended science of later times, denominated *Arithmomancy* or *Arithmancy*, a pretended method of foretelling future events by means of numbers. The ordinary Greek term for counting is *ἀριθμέω*, as Matt. x. 30, “The hairs of your head are all *counted*,” or numbered, *ἀριθμημένοι εἰσὶ*.

Taking all these peculiarities into view, we think the word *count*, in this passage, (*ψηφισάτω*), is designed to carry with it a mystic or cabalistic allu-

\* The account given of Haman in the book of Esther furnishes an example of the authority and functions of an eastern prime minister, or *grand vizier*; and so far affords an illustration of the office of the second beast: not a sovereign himself, but exercising all the power of his sovereign; abusing that power, and hypocritically sanctioning this abuse, by causing it to appear as a dictate of divine will.

sion, something different from a mere arithmetical calculation ; as if it had been said, alluding to the astrologers of the East, the soothsayers of the Greeks and Romans, or the *cabalists* of the Jews,\* Here is real *wisdom* ! as in contradistinction to the wisdom of these pretenders ; here is a real mystery, as distinguished from their pretended mysteries ; here is a *number*, under which there is really something of importance concealed ; a number, the counting or casting of which is really worthy the attention of those who have, or profess to have, *understanding* in these matters. Here is a number really given, from which the purport of the divine mind, in a certain particular, may be ascertained. Let those who have the true understanding turn their attention to this number.

§ 316. ‘ For it is the number of a man, and his number (is) six hundred threescore (and) six ;’—or, it is *the number of man*, or of *the man* ; or, it is a number *of man*, and the number of it, or of him, that is, of the beast, is six hundred and sixty-six— $\chi\xi\xi'$ .

We suppose the term *man* to be as figurative as the term *beast* ; both of them in the Apocalypse being put for a principle, or something of that nature. The number six hundred and sixty-six is usually supposed to express the name of a person or thing ; each letter of which, according to the ancient mode of representing numbers by letters of the alphabet, possesses a certain arithmetical value, the aggregate value of all of the letters of the name constituting this mystic sum. Various calculations have been made upon this hypothesis, showing the different names to which this number may be applied. Calmet enumerates fourteen of these, (art. Antichrist ;) others have been since made by more modern writers. We do not pretend to decide upon any of them ; believing that the real character of the beast is to be discovered from other data, and that this number, if used in the way proposed, is to be so only in proof of the correctness of the deductions made from other particulars in the character and history of the animal.

The figures of Scriptural language appear often to be governed by the chain of thought incident to the subject under consideration. The system or mystery of the beast is represented as a kingdom under the dominion of an absolute sovereign. The mercenary and selfish character of the system is represented by the universal avocation of the subjects of this kingdom—

\* The cabalist Rabbins are said to have studied principally the combinations of particular words, letters, and numbers, expecting to discover by these means the sense of certain difficult passages of Scripture. The *artificial Cabala* is of three kinds : of these the *Cabala Gematry* “ consists in taking the letters of a Hebrew word for arithmetical numbers, and explaining every word by the arithmetical value of the letters composing it.”—(See Calmet Dict. art. *Cabala* and *Cabalists*.)



the business of *buying* and *selling*. The idea of buying and selling suggests the idea of the use of *coin* as an instrument of traffic. The use of the metallic medium gives rise to the idea of the *legalization of coin*; and this we may suppose brings forward an allusion to the custom of the Romans in this particular in the time of the apostles.

Coining, amongst the Hebrews, does not seem to have been introduced till about the time of the Maccabees; and even then, it is said, the Jews were particularly careful to avoid stamping their money with the image of any earthly object. Amongst the Greeks, it was first adopted by Alexander the Great, who is said to have put the image of his horse upon some of his coins. Amongst the Romans, in the time of the republic, coining was a privilege enjoyed and availed of by the richer citizens, whose name or mark was impressed upon the pieces of money they issued, as a kind of warranty of their value, but no one was permitted to stamp such coin with his own image; Julius Cæsar being the first to whom this distinction was allotted. Subsequent to his time, and of course under all the Cæsars, the money receivable by government appears to have borne the impress of the reigning monarch, if not that of his predecessors; corresponding with what is said of the tribute money, Matt. xxii. 20, 21, "Whose is this image, and superscription? They say unto him, *Cæsar's*." That the prime minister of a despotic prince should induce his master to issue an edict that no coin should pass current, or be used in traffic, but such as bore the image and superscription or name of the monarch, is an idea which it is easy to suppose might have been familiar with persons of all classes, at the time when this Apocalypse was written. An illustration, accordingly, drawn from such a supposed enactment would be readily comprehended.\*

The false prophet had caused his master to become an object of the most servile adoration; if not directly, at least indirectly, through the worship of his image. Not satisfied with this, he causes the exercise of sovereign power over the *circulating medium* of his country to be carried to its utmost extent; requiring every element of that medium to bear the mark or image, or number of the despot, without which it is of no avail as a representative of value. A figure the more striking, when we consider that from a very early period this exercise of sovereignty has been coveted, for the purpose of enabling despotic rulers to raise a revenue, and so to augment their power by giving a fictitious value to debased coin; arbitrarily obliging their subjects to attach more importance to the *mark of the prince* than to the

\* One of the Roman emperors is said to have refused the tribute money of a subjugated nation, because it was not paid in his own coin. Not bearing his image and superscription, and being the coin of another, it seemed to derogate from his authority over his tributaries.—(Vid. Charlestown Ed. Calmet. Frag., No. 92.)

purity of the metal ;—governments having learned only of later years, and in the more civilized countries of Christendom, the important lesson in this particular, that for them as well as for their subjects *honesty is the best policy*.

The Mahometans, like the Jews, scrupulously avoid the exhibition upon their coin of any image or picture of natural objects. The coined money of the Turks to this day, instead of bearing the image of the Grand Signor, is stamped with a *fac simile* of his sign manual, or with certain letters or characters equivalent to a designation of his name or title, and the date of the issue. As the coin of the Romans was legalized by the image and superscription of the ruler, that of eastern countries is so by the letters of the name or title of the sovereign. Amongst the Persians, it is said, (Chambers's Dict.,) no gold coin is stamped except in the first year of the monarch's reign ; and if we were disposed to keep the idea of time in view, this number of the beast, six hundred and sixty-six, might be supposed to designate the date of the commencement of his reign ; from which era the twelve hundred and sixty years might be calculated. But we think the reasons are too strong for rejecting any literal idea of time in this matter ; and we are rather inclined to think, if the figure contemplated be that of *coin*, that the number six hundred and sixty-six on the coin is susceptible of being converted into a name of some *principle* which, when ascertained, will serve as a *seal* to a correct interpretation of the whole of this portion of revelation. We may suppose a certain prince to cause a part of his coin to bear the impress of his image, another part the impress of his name, and another part to be stamped with certain characters equal to a given number, which at the same time is equivalent to the sum of the letters of his name, or of one of his names ; these letters, as amongst the Greeks and eastern nations in the time of the apostles, answering the double purpose of arithmetical and alphabetical characters. The law of the realm in the dominions of the prince supposed, in conformity with this arrangement of the *mint*, may thus be imagined to prohibit the use of any coin in the acquisition of riches, or even in the payment of a ransom, unless it bear one or the other of these three impressions, all or either of which may be denominated the *mark* of the prince.

Analogous with this, the first beast being taken for the controlling principle of a blasphemous and mercenary system, (his kingdom ;) the false prophet, or second beast, for a false interpretation ; and riches being a figure of the means of eternal life ; we may suppose the whole of this account to represent the effect of an erroneous literal or *carnal* interpretation of revealed truth, tending to establish a doctrinal system, every principle of which must necessarily be impressed with the characteristic of self or selfishness,

as a *sine qua non*, without which it is deemed of no avail in this supposed system of salvation. In this construction the change of figure, from the *subjects* of the prince bearing his mark in their foreheads or in their right hands, to the circulating medium of his dominions, is no more sudden or extraordinary than the change in the case of the Euphratean angels, and in that of the war in heaven, already noticed ; changes of figure so entirely wanting in premonition being consistent with the composition of a *vision*, and perhaps with that of a vision only.

Whether the name or number of the beast, however, be expressed on a piece of coin or otherwise, or whatever the allusion may be in this figure, the difficulty in understanding what the number (six hundred and sixty-six) imports, still remains. Here we must keep our opinions in suspense till the proper moment of development arrives. As it is said, 1 Cor. iv. 5, "Therefore judge nothing before the time until the Lord come, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts ;"—the moving principles of action. While we keep our judgments in suspense, however, we are to search the Scriptures to investigate and to examine ; comparing *spiritual things with spiritual* : remembering that the things of the Spirit of God, which are foolishness to those who understand them literally, are to be spiritually discerned ; and, consequently, their proper spiritual sense is to be sought for : and as this sense is to be gathered from the literal expression or allusion, it is important for us to ascertain correctly what this literal expression or allusion is ; and this, perhaps, in the case before us, is all that we can do at present.

The words rendered in our common version, "Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is six hundred and sixty-six," might equally be rendered, as already intimated, "Let him that hath understanding count, or *cast*, the number of the beast, for it is *a number of man*, and the number of him (that is, of the beast) is six hundred and sixty-six ;" the number of the beast being explained in the previous chapter as the number of the *name* of the beast ; that is, if we get at the right meaning of the number it will give us the name of the beast ; and this name will correspond with a number of man, or with the number of a *name of man*. The several letters of this *name of man* having each, according to the ancient mode of representing numbers already alluded to, a certain numerical value, the sum of the letters will give the number, showing who or what the real beast is ; thus confirming or setting aside the suppositions originating from other indications. If, for example, we should find a generic name of *man*, the letters of which amounted to the sum of six hundred and sixty-six, such a name would correspond very nearly with our suggestion, that *self* (man's self or



something like it) is the blasphemous beast, setting up a kingdom in the human heart, or establishing a system of faith in opposition to JEHOVAH, and sustained in this rebellious action by what we may term a literal or carnal construction of the written word of revelation. For if we suppose every man's self to be his own saviour, we do in effect elevate *man* to the position supposed to be assumed by the beast, or to be given to him by the false prophet.

We have not, however, yet found the *name of man* here supposed. Our remarks, therefore, must be taken as they are intended, merely as suggestions, and our judgment of the designation to be given to the ten-horned beast must be still suspended; except, indeed, that he may be safely identified, we think, with the *man of sin* of Paul, and the *Antichrist* or *spirit of error* of John.

The apostle John in his first epistle (1 John ii. 18-22) speaks of many Antichrists, and gives us (ch. iv. 1-6) marks or tokens by which they may be discerned. From all these it appears that by the term *Antichrist* he means the spirit of an anti-evangelical doctrine; and he alludes especially to the *spirit of error*, as something intimately connected with *that of Antichrist which should come*, and perhaps as identic with it. The spirit of error, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πλάνης, or spirit of delusion or deception, must nearly resemble in its action the false prophet or two-horned beast of Revelation; the term which as a substantive is rendered by *error* in the epistle, being the same as that which as a verb is applied to the deception of the false prophet in the Apocalypse. This suggests to us the probability that the same mystery of iniquity which is spoken of in the epistles of both apostles as the action of one spirit of delusion, may be represented in the Apocalypse by the action of three several figures: the first beast, the false prophet, and the harlot. So the first beast with seven heads, taking *seven* for a sign of *totality*, (§ 9,) may represent *all* Antichrists, or false Christs; the blasphemous element of self-exaltation, self-justification, or self-redemption exhibiting itself in a variety of forms.

The action of the second beast or false prophet in his misinterpretation of Scripture, it will be perceived, corresponds very nearly with that ascribed to the *tail* of the dragon, (§ 273,) in dragging the stars of heaven down to earth, and so far coinciding with the scriptural definition of a false interpreter: The prophet that speaketh lies, he is the *tail*. In other words, the two-horned beast from the earth and the tail of the dragon are identic; the last probably, like the tails of the Euphratean horse and those of the scorpion-locusts, carrying with it the sting of the serpent; the false interpretation tending to bring the disciple back to his position under the law, and exposing him to the sting of death.

We have thus gone through with the description of the first and second beast in the full exercise of their powers; and here the narrative leaves them for the present. We are to suppose this exercise of power to continue for the period designated in the fifth verse of the chapter, *forty-two months*, whatever is to be understood by that period as an apocalyptic term of time. Our attention will hereafter be called to the termination of their power, and the character of their end.

#### RETROSPECT.

§ 317. In the preceding remarks we have supposed the first beast spoken of in this chapter to represent the element or principle of SELF; but this, as we wish it to be understood, is only by way of approximation, to give a facility to the illustration of our views; as, in a mathematical demonstration by algebraic process, a letter, *x* for example, is assumed as the sum or answer sought for. The appellation does not exactly meet our wishes, and, as already intimated, we are not yet sufficiently advanced in the history of these two extraordinary animals to give a decided opinion respecting them; and perhaps the time has not yet arrived when a perfect development of their characters is to be expected. The discovery of the name of the ten-horned beast would, perhaps, involve an entire exposition of the spirit of error, of which we suppose this beast to be the moving principle—such an exposition of error, involving an equally entire exposition of truth; which last is to be expected, we apprehend, only at the epoch spoken of as *the day of the Lord*: of course, till that time the name of the beast must remain amongst the *hidden things*, then only to be brought to light, (1 Cor. iv. 5.)

At present, in respect to the first beast, we content ourselves with reverting to some of the particulars before commented upon, by way of fixing in our minds the stage of development at which we have arrived, prior to the change of scene taking place at the commencement of the next chapter.

Of the second beast, there are some peculiarities mentioned in this chapter which are not again adverted to, and which it appears necessary to enlarge upon more fully here, that our meaning may be better understood.

The first beast emanates from the element of wrath or of legal apprehension, (the sea.) We do not mean to say that *self* originates from that element; but we think that this principle obtains its exaltation, or is made to appear the author of its own salvation, by that apprehension of the wrath of divine justice which originates from the supposition that the sinner is to work out his own salvation, as under the law, by his own merits,—to justify and

redeem himself by works of righteousness, which he has done ; the terrors of the law misapplied leading the disciple into the delusive effort of going about to justify or to redeem himself, and thereby virtually causing a blasphemous exaltation of *self*. Accordingly, the seven heads of the beast represent seven pretensions, or, as a figure of totality, all the pretensions of *self*; being opposites, perhaps, of the seven spirits before the throne, and the seven horns and seven eyes of the Lamb. So the beast employs the ten horns, or powers of the law, the decalogue being put for the whole law, the power wielded in asserting the prerogative of *self*. Not that there is any thing in the law, in its own nature, to countenance this exaltation of *self*: on the contrary, the law lawfully used convinces of sin ; but it is the illegal use of the law,—the pretension that it is to be fulfilled by man, which causes it to appear to be a weapon or power of *self*. So these horns of the beast are crowned with *diadems*, and not the heads, because the attribute of sovereignty claimed by *self*, is supposed to be derived from the operation of the law ; the real power being in the law represented by the horns, and not in the pretensions represented by the heads. It is accordingly these last which bear the name of *blasphemy*, as they in effect assume for *self* an equality with God.

The first beast had a leopard skin, appearing in a spotted raiment, an opposite of the *white* linen or righteousness of the saints, without spot ;—*self* being arrayed in a garment of salvation not entirely of its own merits, but of a mixed character, (hypocritically ;) as the deluded disciple, professing to depend upon Christ alone, claims, notwithstanding, to be arrayed partly in his own merit, and partly in that of his Saviour. For we suppose the blasphemous principle represented by the beast to be something exhibiting itself in the Christian church, nominally such,—something resting its claims upon a perversion of gospel revelation ; not a thing entirely irrespective of it. Not that *self* is in its own nature an amalgam ; for if it appeared in its true character the colour of its array would be entirely the opposite of *white* ; but apocalyptically, when revealed, its pretensions have this spotted or mixed appearance ; this mixture at the same time being of a blasphemous character, because any pretension even of the partial efficiency of man's righteousness in the process of salvation, is virtually a division of the glory of that salvation with Him, who has declared that *He will not divide this glory with another*.

Armed as this monster *self* is with the powers of the law, he utters the denunciations of justice with the voice or mouth of the lion, possessing at the same time the power, and occupying the position, and discharging the functions, of the legal accuser.

Taking all these features into consideration, we suppose the beast to represent an opposite of Christ, the Lamb without spot ; something sub-



stituting itself in the place of him who was God manifest in the flesh ; as a disciple claiming to be saved by virtue of his own righteousness, and his own holiness, although professedly a Christian, in effect places himself in his own heart or mind in the position of his divine Redeemer.

§ 318. The construction above adopted appears to be confirmed by the consideration that the beast not only appeared with seven heads, or seven blasphemous pretensions, but also that one of these heads, especially, appeared as having been slain in sacrifice, and again restored to life ; which characteristic of the head is afterwards identified with the whole beast ; showing that one of his blasphemous pretensions consisted in the assumption of an equality with Him who died for our sins, and was raised for our justification,—who declares himself in the vision to have been dead, and yet to be alive for evermore, (Rev. i. 18.) This beast professes to have performed the same propitiatory work ;—like Christ, or rather instead of Christ, having more than satisfied the demands of infinite justice ; on which account it seems to have been wondered after by all the world, with the admiring interrogative, Who is like unto the beast ? who is able to make war with him ?—implying a belief in the power of the beast, by virtue of this slaughtered and resuscitated head, to overcome the *accuser* ;\* for we are not to suppose the *world* cognitive of the fact, that the beast derives his power from the accuser : this is a mystery known only to those who see as John saw, *in spirit*, and in a heavenly position. The world supposes the beast to be its champion in the contest with the dragon ; as he who confides in his own righteousness looks upon his own *self* as the object of trust in the great work of legal justification ; not considering that this self, from the very position which it occupies, must be an agent or instrument of the element

\* We do not propose to point out decidedly the signification to be attached to this wounded head ; but we suppose, for illustration, that, of seven heads or leading principles in the process of *self-exaltation*, the element of repentance or penitence, erroneously contemplated, may be considered the more than sufficient atonement offered by the beast ; the apparent triumphant sufficiency of this element being that which excites the wonder of the world, and which gives the error its currency in human estimation.

There may be a variety of ways in which this element is exhibited, from the self-inflicted flagellations of the hermit of the desert, to the more refined mental self-mortification of those who, in later times and in more enlightened regions, *go mourning all their days*. The error being the same in all, if this exercise of mind or body be put for propitiation, or be substituted as an object of faith or trust, in place of the atonement of Christ. The world we may say has been carried away with the same false estimate of the power of this element of man's righteousness, from the time when the wilds of Africa bore testimony to the well-meant but mistaken seclusion of early Christians, to the present day, when the sombre, subdued aspect of the devotee tells of the atoning sacrifice he is endeavouring to work out for himself by his own voluntary humiliation, mental or corporeal.—(Vid. Col. ii. 23.)

of accusation. With these assumptions and pretensions *self* is enabled to overcome the elements of gospel truth, (the saints or holy ones,) for a certain season; and all on the earth, with a certain exception only, are said to worship him. So we may say, almost literally, that the error of self-righteousness or of self-dependence, in the matter of salvation, is the predominant error of mankind; man, almost universally, making himself in effect the object of his own adoration. The representation, however, in the present case, we suppose to be confined to the predominance of the error in contemplation especially in the visible Christian church, symbolized by the seven churches; to which churches the whole revelation is inscribed, and for the edification of which the vision is committed to writing: "For what have I to do," says Paul, "with them that are without—them that are without God judgeth," 1 Cor. v. 12, 13.

This predominance of *self* we suppose to be something of a *universal* character in the visible church—something arising from, or sanctioned by, a misconstruction or misinterpretation of divine revelation, and of course to be found where that revelation is found. As we may say, those who have never seen the Scriptures can know nothing of the misconstruction to which they are liable: as it is also where Christ is preached that Antichrists make their appearance. The *man of sin* seating himself in the temple of God; not taking up his abode where there is no such temple: the tares growing amongst the wheat, not in a field by themselves; so, wherever the visible church of Christ is to be found, there the *spirit of error* will also be found insinuating itself in a greater or less degree; and this we are not to confine to any particular sect, or denomination of Christianity.

§ 319. Although from a perusal of the first part of this chapter the ten-horned beast appears to exercise his power and authority, as of himself and by his own acts; yet, by comparing this account with that given in the latter part of the chapter of the second beast, it is evident that all that is done by the first is through the agency of the second. It is the two-horned beast which causeth the first beast to be worshipped; it is by the delusion or deception practised by the second beast, that all the world is led to wonder after the first beast, that the saints or holy ones are overcome, that an image of the first beast is created as an object of adoration, and that all are caused to be subservient to the first beast.

This second beast has two horns, and these two horns we suppose to be two powers by which he acts,—the instruments with which he performs his wonders, and by which all his functions are discharged. As we take the ten horns of the first beast to represent the decalogue—the whole law constituting his power—so we suppose the two horns of the second beast to be two doctrinal powers; and as these two horns are said to be *like* those of a lamb, or of *the* lamb, we suppose them to represent two leading doctrines,

in appearance seeming to be two important doctrines of the gospel, or of Christ, but only so in appearance. They are not in fact the two horns of a lamb, but they are really two horns of a ferocious, destructive, and unclean animal; an animal speaking in effect the language of a dragon, or of *the* dragon or accuser, while it affects the countenance of a lamb; its power, its ability to delude, depending upon its appearing to have two horns like *the Lamb*.

We have a key to the character of this beast, which we lack in the description given of the other. The two-horned beast throughout the remainder of the book is uniformly termed the false prophet, and this so manifestly in connection with the first beast that there can be no mistake respecting him. This *false prophet*, (as we feel no difficult in averring,) must be a false interpretation or construction; consequently, his two horns are two doctrines, or doctrinal powers, peculiar to, and growing out of this false construction. As the horns of an animal emanate from its head, so these two doctrines emanate from the leading principle of the false construction or misinterpretation of revealed truth, represented by this second beast. The power of the first beast is exercised through the agency of the second; so we suppose the exaltation and deification of *self* to be the result of a certain misconstruction of revealed truth; and as we may suppose the second beast could not act his part without the instrumentality of his two horns—his only weapons—so this misconstruction, or false interpretation, could not effect its blasphemous exaltation of self, nor cause its marks of subserviency to be inflicted upon the subordinate elements subjected to its control, if it were not for these two *pseudo* doctrinal powers—powers having the appearance of two important and leading doctrines of the gospel, but in reality widely differing from them.

§ 320. The real Lamb was seen, Rev. v. 6, to have seven horns and seven eyes, declared to be the seven spirits of God. The Spirit of God we suppose to be an expression nearly equivalent to the power of God. These seven spirits then are powers (§ 137) qualifying the Lamb for opening the sealed book. The horns of the Lamb might indeed be considered powers of salvation; but we cannot suppose the salvation of the sinner through Christ to be effected by seven distinct powers, or even operations; we may, however, consider the one power of salvation exhibited and *illustrated* by seven different operations, all resulting in the same effect. These horns of the real Lamb may be considered seven different powers of illustration, by which the mystery of Christ's salvation is exemplified and brought home to the understanding of the disciple. They may be properly considered the weapons or instruments by which he develops the contents of the sealed book, and may be thus appropriately styled doctrinal powers. Christ is the only way of salvation, and the only way of being saved is to be *in Christ*,—to be



contemplated by God as in Christ ; but there may be seven different modes of illustration, by which this one way is to be made familiar to the human mind. The process of atonement, redemption, or vicarious sacrifice, may be one of these modes or symbols ; that of burial with Christ by baptism, and subsequent resurrection, may be another ; union, as by marriage, may be another ; communion, as in a participation of flesh and blood, another ; adoption, another ; regeneration, or the new birth, another ; and sanctification, or *setting apart*, another. These are not distinct operations, but seven different figures, all resolving themselves into the one operation, of substitution in Christ. Provided with these, the true Lamb appears prepared to open the sealed book,—to develop the divine plan of salvation.

The false prophet, as the second beast exhibits himself, has two horns only, carefully avoiding even a simulation of the other five organs of revelation. These two instruments of *indoctrination* appear to be two of the horns of the real Lamb, and by the aid of this similarity of appearance the impostor is able to perform all his wonders. As a false prophet he operates by misinterpretation, putting a false construction on the language of revelation ; but this operation owes its efficiency to the two doctrinal powers, so much resembling certain gospel powers, and perhaps in human estimation entitled to bear the same appellation. By these two simulated doctrines we suppose the whole gospel system to be so perverted as to represent the disciple in a position of dependence upon his own merits ; as much indebted to his own *self* for his eternal salvation and future happiness, as if no redemption had been wrought out for him ; making him in effect a worshipper of *self* ; causing him to fabricate in the imagination of his heart an idol of his own pretended righteousness ; looking to this image as an object calling for his devotion and gratitude, and necessarily stamping all his actions of mind or body with the characteristic of a mercenary and selfish motive ; virtually denying to God the Saviour—the Lord our righteousness—the tribute of gratitude due to Him, and to Him alone ; and tending to deprive him of that glory which is not only his, but is that in which no other being can be permitted to participate.

Without pretending to point out definitively what two doctrines are contemplated, as counterfeited in this figure of the horns of the beast from the earth, we assume as such, for illustrating our views, the two last named of the seven doctrinal powers above enumerated ; and we do this, because the genuine doctrines are justly, and almost universally considered, with all denominations of Christians, as of the utmost importance, and because of the seven they are most liable perhaps to perversion. We mean the doctrines of regeneration, or of the new birth ; and of sanctification, or of holiness.

The process of *regeneration*, and that of *sanctification*, according to the

Scriptures, are both of them indispensable to the salvation of man; and yet their agency cannot be inconsistent with the all-predominant truth, that Christ only is the efficient cause of the sinner's redemption,—that there is no other name given amongst men than the name of Jesus, whereby we can be saved, and that this salvation through him is of *grace* alone.

§ 321. We shall first show what we apprehend to be the Scripture doctrine of these two powers, and afterwards in what manner we suppose them to be so misrepresented as to be attended by the errors of faith depicted in the operations and delusions of the second beast or false prophet.

“Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” This is the language of him, who declares himself to be the life of the world; who became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God *in him*. Can it be that, notwithstanding this vicarious work of the Redeemer, the sinner is lost unless he undergo a certain change within himself, making him almost, in a *literal* sense, a new creature?

We have somewhere read of the custom of a barbarous nation, by which a captive taken in war is not only spared as to his life, but is also taken into the family of the captor, and adopted in the place of a member of that family whose life has been lost in the same contest in which this captive has been taken; not only so, the ceremony of this adoption is that of celebrating the birth of a child;—the adoption of the captive by this act of *grace* on the part of the captor, being esteemed equivalent, in the apprehension of these barbarians, to a *new birth* of the favoured individual.

Whether this custom has been correctly detailed or not, it answers the purpose of illustrating our views. We suppose in the meaning of divine revelation no difference to exist between adoption in Christ, and regeneration or a new birth. We do not suppose the disciple to be first *adopted*, and afterwards born again, but rather that the two figures represent the same process—a process also identic with that of regeneration. This process we contemplate as an act solely of the *word*, or purpose of God—an act of sovereign grace, not only freely pardoning the sinner, but also receiving him in the place of a beloved son, looking upon him as in the face of the Anointed. *In Christ*,—thus substituted in the place of Christ, in God's account,—the disciple is a new creature, recreated or regenerated in a spiritual sense; a change by which the redeemed sinner is made to participate *by imputation* in the purifying power of his Saviour's atonement, and in the justifying efficacy of his righteousness. Such a regeneration effects, as we conceive, the appropriation of the great vicarious sacrifice of the master to the disciple, in whose behalf the offering is made. Without this process the offering could not be so appropriated, neither could we see the



connection between the sacrifice and the sinner; and yet there is nothing in this arrangement inconsistent with any portion of the scheme of God's salvation through Christ by *grace*, in the strictest sense of the term;—the declaration, Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God, being equivalent to declaring, that except a man be accounted by God to be *in Christ*, he cannot participate in the benefits of redemption, not being in the position spoken of as the kingdom of God.

“Without holiness no man shall see the Lord,” (Heb. xii. 14;)—or, as the word translated *holiness* here (*ἁγιασμός*) is rendered in five other passages of the New Testament, without sanctification no man shall see the Lord. This is the declaration of an apostle, who, of all others, points out the salvation of Christ most distinctly and explicitly as a matter of grace, in contradistinction to one of works. Can it be then that all this *grace*, and all the work of Christ are of no avail, unless there be in the disciple a certain portion at least of some intrinsic good quality termed *holiness*; upon the existence of which, *as a condition*, he is to ground his hope of appearing in the presence of his God? and if so, how much of this good quality is necessary to qualify a man for the privilege contemplated? It is not said, however, ‘Without *some degree* of holiness, no man can see the Lord,’ nor is there any idea of a partial good quality, or of a sanctification *in part* at all implied. Whatever this holiness is, it must be something whole and entire.

We take the term holiness or sanctification here as we have taken it elsewhere, to be a term of *position*; the result or effect of a *setting apart* of the person or thing said to be sanctified; this setting apart, if effected at all, being something entire and complete. The gold of the temple was not sanctified *in part*, neither was it changed in its *quality*, by being attached to the sacred edifice. The offering upon the altar was not sanctified in part, nor was it changed in essence by being placed upon the sacred pile, but it was sanctified by its *position*. So the holiness\* or sanctification of the disciple is not an intrinsic change of quality in him, but it is a change of his position; he is sanctified, or set apart, or made holy *in Christ*: and this not partially, but altogether. In Christ he is regarded, in divine estimation, as being taken out of his position by nature and placed in a position of grace. In Christ, and *in him*, (as by adoption,) he is in that position which will qualify him for seeing God; as, in Christ, under the figure of being born again, he is in the same divine estimation a *new creature*. So Moses was enabled to see God, not by a change wrought in himself, but by being placed *in a cleft of the rock*. So, likewise, the Corinthians were sanctified or made holy *in Christ*, and called (termed) holy, or saints, 1 Cor. 1, 2;\* no doubt, because they were so sanctified, (*ἁγιασμένοις ἐν Χρισ-*

\* The words *to be* in this verse have been, as we conceive, unnecessarily and gratuitously supplied by our translators.



τῷ Ἰησοῦ, κλητοῖς ἁγίοις.) As it is also said of them, (1 Cor. vi. 11,) “But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified *in the name* of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God ;” the *spirit*, as we apprehend, of adoption. They are sanctified in the same way that they are washed and justified ; that is, by the *word* or purpose of God, and they are no more said to be sanctified *in part* than they are said to be washed or justified in part. So it is elsewhere said in respect to them, (1 Cor. i. 30, 31,) “But of him are ye *in Christ Jesus*, who of God is made unto us [by imputation] wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification [or holiness], and redemption ;” that is, the means of redemption. Not wisdom in part, nor righteousness in part, nor holiness in part, or redemption in part, but wholly and entirely ; and this, for the reason given, that he that glorieth should glory, not in himself, but in the Lord. This apparently could not be the case if the disciple’s salvation were due partly to the work of Christ wrought out for him, and partly to a work wrought in him ; in which he might appear to be a *co-operator* with his divine Master.

The *word* of Christ was sufficient to heal the centurion’s servant, and the same divine word or purpose which said, “Let there be light, and there was light,” says of the disciple, Let him be in Christ, and he is in Christ ; and in Christ he is a new creature. This Divine WORD, or purpose, (λόγος,) the Spirit or power of God, we apprehend to be variously spoken of as the spirit of adoption, of sanctification, of regeneration, &c. ; the figures differing, but the process in every respect being none other than the act of sovereign grace, justifying the disciple through the *imputed* righteousness of Christ, and cleansing the sinner through the *imputed* merit of his Redeemer’s atoning sacrifice.

Here these two horns of the real Lamb represent (as may be said also of all of its seven horns) powers of salvation perfectly consistent with the work itself, as of *grace*, leaving not the shadow of a pretence for the grounding of any portion of the disciple’s hopes or claims of, or for, eternal life upon any degree whatever of merit, or righteousness, or holiness of his own.

§ 322. We will now suppose these processes of regeneration and sanctification, by a misinterpretation of Scripture to be represented as consisting in some *intrinsic* change in the disciple’s own character—his own improvement in goodness and virtue—a certain moral perfection and goodness wrought in him ; admitted indeed to be so by divine operation, as he is also admitted to have been created by divine power, but still a change in him, and not in his position ; an operation in which he himself is supposed perhaps to perform a principal part. As if it were said, Except you possess a certain degree of moral goodness of your own, you cannot see the kingdom of God ; or, without a certain good *quality* in yourself, termed holiness, you cannot see God. You are to trust not to what has been

done for you, but to what you are yourself, and to what you may have been enabled to do yourself, for your hopes of eternal life. It must be easy to perceive that, under such a construction, the pretended horns of the lamb become the horns of a destructive animal. They confine the disciple to a position of dependence upon his own merits, and place him as much under the operation of the law as if this law had never been fulfilled in his behalf. They cause the means of salvation to appear to be partly human and partly divine; an amalgamation, and as such they are the horns of an animal leuitically *unclean*: as doctrinal powers of the false prophet, they are instruments of interpretation tending altogether to establish the kingdom of *self*; to cause every man to erect in his own heart an image of his own supposed righteousness—the object thenceforth of his idolatrous worship; to act from the motive only of serving and glorifying himself; contemplating his own *self* as the efficient author of his eternal happiness, and consequently as the proper object of his gratitude, love, and adoration.

§ 323. Here the false prophet may be supposed to urge the plausible argument that, if no intrinsic holiness or goodness be required as a condition of salvation, there remains no motive to induce the disciple's obedience to the moral law, or to incite him to the devotion of himself to the service of his God.

It is just at this point that the elements of the kingdom of Christ, and those of the kingdom of the Beast, may be said to join issue. The false prophet pre-supposes the insufficiency of any motive not of a selfish character. He contends for the predominant principle of the love of *self* as the best and most powerful motive of conduct. The doctrine of the gospel, on the contrary, in this particular is, as defined by an apostle, that “the end of the commandment is *charity*,” that is, *love*, (*ἀγάπη*), the love of God: a sentiment of gratitude excited and forever stimulated by the knowledge and recollection of his great goodness and loving-kindness; and a sentiment depending essentially upon the fact, that this goodness or loving-kindness has been entirely undeserved; a sentiment growing out of the inference, from the gospel exhibition of salvation by *grace* alone, that the disciple's entire devotion of himself to the service of his God and Redeemer is his *reasonable service*, (Rom. xii. 1.)

The law presents the standard of right and wrong—the rule of conduct. It exhibits the criterion of what is, and of what must ever be, pleasing or displeasing to God; but in its own nature, it provides no stimulus for obedience except the servile motive of the *fear of punishment*, or the mercenary motive of the *hope of reward*,—both motives of a purely selfish character. The gospel dispensation in the nature of the case disavows a stimulus of

this kind—it sets these motives entirely aside—it adopts the same rule of moral conduct as the law, the same standard of good and evil ; but it furnishes a new *motive* of action, the pure motive of *gratitude*—gratitude for the benefit of eternal life ; a benefit, the infinite value of which is rendered the more obvious in proportion as it is most rigidly contrasted with the infinite worthlessness of the recipient. The obedience and self-devotion of the disciple to the God of his salvation, are thus a grateful return for the benefit of his new creation or regeneration in Christ, and not a part of the process : a grateful return for his sanctification, his being set apart in Christ, (the holiness of his position,) and not a part of this sanctification or holiness.

The *change of motive* above described, we apprehend to be that spoken of by Paul, Eph. iv. 23, as a *renewal of the spirit of the mind*, a change in the moving principle of action, from one of self-love to one of love to God—from one of a selfish and mercenary character to a sentiment of thankfulness or gratitude—a change of mental principle, not prior to conversion, or to the intellectual operations of repentance and faith in Christ, but a change of views which established disciples, such as the Ephesians are described to have been, (Eph. i. 3–15,) may be called to undergo : a mental change, which, however imperfect in this life, cannot be otherwise than perfect with all the redeemed in their future state of being.

The motives furnished by the law must necessarily cease to operate with our present state of existence. The barrier of death once passed, hope and fear can no longer find room for action ; the joyful or the solemn realities of eternity once commenced, remain forever unchanged. The motive for serving God, furnished by the gospel, on the contrary, must be as lasting as endless duration, and as boundless as the infinite enjoyment for which the gratitude of the beneficiary is due. When millions of years of bliss have rolled away, and millions of millions yet remain in anticipation, the language of every individual redeemed must be still the same : “ I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies ; how much less of this great love wherewith thou hast loved me.” Surely there is here a motive of service, which may freely dispense with any element of a selfish or mercenary character ! And is it too much to require that the conduct of the disciple of Jesus should be regulated, even in this life, by the same principle which is to direct and stimulate all his actions in a state of endless bliss ?

§ 324. The legal dispensation demanded the love of God in the heart as its first and chiefest requisition ; the gospel dispensation creates this love, by furnishing that display of sovereign mercy so strongly appealing to all the best feelings of the human heart for a grateful return. In the blest fruition of a future state, the whole extent of the benefits set forth by the gospel will be realized ; but in this life the disciple’s gratitude must depend upon



his *faith* and *hope*—his belief and trust, that the blessings thus set forth are his, accompanied with the conviction that on his part they are wholly undeserved.

It will be perceived, that in contemplating the spiritual operations of regeneration and sanctification as figures of *position*, we consider them entirely distinct from *repentance*, and *conversion to a belief of the gospel*; these last being indisputably operations of the mind. We do not enlarge upon them here, because the subject does not seem to call for it,\* but it must be evident that the gratitude or love, which constitutes the only pure and lasting motive of conduct, necessarily involves the mental exercise of all that is understood by repentance and faith. The gratitude of the disciple in this life for the inestimable benefit of redemption must depend not only upon his *belief* of the freeness of the salvation wrought for him, but also upon his conviction of the *reality* of the danger from which he has escaped. If sin be really a matter of no moment, or if the disciple himself be not *really* a sinner; if there be nothing hereafter to dread equivalent to a judgment to come,—nothing like a future state of punishment—no coming wrath to apprehend; then there can be *really* no room for salvation—no call for a Saviour; and, consequently, no occasion for that plan of redemption illustrated by the various figures we have supposed; and if so, all that we have said, and all that the Scriptures imply, of the reasonableness of the disciple's grateful devotion of himself to the service of his God, must be without foundation. On the other hand, if there be a *reality* in these things, just in proportion to the

\* The Apocalypse, it is to be remembered, is represented as designed for the use of certain churches. These assemblies are not supposed to be of the character of the unconverted heathen, or even of unbelieving Jews; they are supposed to have passed through the external processes of conversion; they are already of the household of faith; their errors are errors of doctrine. They do not require, like the Roman governor, a reasoning of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come; neither are they *neophytes* or novices, requiring to be taught, or retaught the first principles of the oracles of God; τὰ στοιχεῖα τῆς ἀρχῆς τῶν λόγων τοῦ Θεοῦ, (Heb. iv. 12.) We are not therefore to look to this vision for a revelation of elementary doctrines specifically, as of a laying again the *foundation* of repentance from dead works and faith towards God. With the doctrines of baptism, and of laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment, these churches are presumed to be already familiar: what they require is a *finishing* or *perfecting* of their faith, and an admonishing of the tendency of erroneous principles in undermining this faith, and in counteracting the operation of those sentiments of gratitude by which the love of God is to be generated. To effect this enlightening of the mind, by developing the divine plan of *substitution*, identifying the follower with his master, Jesus here unveils himself in accordance with his promise, (John xiv. 20, 21,) "At that day ye shall know that I (am) in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you;" \* \* \* \* \* He that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will *manifest myself* to him."

disciple's sense and conviction of this *reality* will be his gratitude towards the **GOD** of his salvation.

It is for this reason we apprehend, that is, to bring home to the mind of the believer a realizing sense of the benefits demanding his thankfulness and love, that the two systems of truth and falsehood are contrasted in this revelation ;—that the disciple may be not only convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, as he is already supposed to be, but that he may be taught also his own entire insufficiency in accomplishing the work of salvation for himself, and his consequent *entire* dependence upon the *Lord his righteousness*.

THE END OF PART I.

## PART II.

### CHAPTER XIV.

#### THE LAMB STANDING ON MOUNT ZION.—THE SIX HERALDS.

V. 1. And I looked, and lo, a [the] Lamb stood on the mount Sion, [ZION,] and with him a hundred forty (and) four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ τὸ ἄρνιον ἐστηκὸς ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος Σιών, καὶ μετ' αὐτοῦ ἑκατὸν τεσσαρακοντατέσσαρες χιλιάδες, ἔχονσαι τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ γεγραμμένον ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν.

§ 325. ‘AND I looked, and lo.’—This is a continuation of the seventh trumpet’s sound; or rather, what is here seen is something existing simultaneously with what is related in the preceding chapter. While the two beasts are exercising their authority on the earth, the Lamb is standing on the Mount Sion;—the succession is only in the spectator’s perception. The apostle had been contemplating the ten-horned beast and his coadjutor in the plenitude of their power; he had seen, as the Psalmist expresses it, “the wicked spreading himself like a green bay tree.” We may suppose his mind to have been almost overwhelmed by a feeling of despondency as well as of astonishment; when suddenly his attention is called to behold the remedial provision intended to counteract the evil influence so justly the subject of lamentation: as, when the eyes of the servant of the prophet in a moment of danger were opened, he saw “the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha,” 2 Kings vi. 14–17.

We have, in the scene presented by the opening of this chapter, an exhibition of a totally different character from that immediately preceding it; the prominent features of the spectacle being opposites of that just now contemplated: a Lamb, or rather *the* Lamb, according to our Greek edition, in place of the ten-horned beast; a mountain instead of the sea, and a multitude with the name of the Father of the Lamb in their foreheads, instead of those bearing the mark of the beast;—the six angels or heralds with the voice from heaven, subsequently described as interpreters of the divine will, being opposites of the false prophet or two-horned beast;—as the heavenly region, in the midst of which their annunciations seem to have been made, is an opposite of the earthly element or system from which the false interpretation emanates. *The mystery*, the development of which is



to be completed or finished in the days of the seventh angel, (Rev. x. 7,) being of this two-fold character—a mystery of truth, and a mystery of error; a mystery of the system of grace and of the love of God on the one hand, and a mystery of the system of works and of covetousness, or of the love of self, on the other. The *wo* of this trumpet, as well as of the preceding, whether it consist in a development of the elements of truth or of the elements of error, is a *wo* to the *dwellers upon the earth*, with the exception of those standing with the Lamb upon Mount Zion. The revelation of course is not a *wo* in any respect to the dwellers in heaven; that which is a *wo* to one class of beings or elements, is a cause of rejoicing to another class.

‘And lo, *the* Lamb stood upon the Mount Zion.’—Whether we employ the definite article or not, it is very evident that the allusion is to the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world; as it is said, Is. lix. 19, 20, When the enemy shall come in like a flood, (Rev. xii. 15,) the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him; and Rom. xi. 26, “There shall come out of *Sion* the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” The two beasts were seen *rising* from their respective elements, intimating something of a transitory character, having a beginning and an end. The Lamb on the contrary is seen *standing*, giving a permanency and unchangeableness to his position; he was and is always there, although not always perceptible to human apprehension.

§ 326. ‘*The* Mount Zion.’—The article in this case may be intended to point out especially the *spiritual* Mount Zion; this spiritual Zion being pre-eminently “the mount of the Lord,” and “the mountain of the Lord’s house;” see Genesis xxii. 14; Is. ii. 2, 3. The literal Zion, or Sion, is said to be a mountain upon which the temple of the Lord was built in Jerusalem by Solomon, and where David built *the city of David*, over against, and north of, the ancient Jebus, or Jerusalem, which stood on the hill opposite to Zion, (Calmet.) It is probably to the spiritual Zion that the king of Israel alludes, Ps. xlviii. 2: “Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King;”—not the city of an earthly king, but of the King of Glory—the King spoken of, Ps. ii. 6, and cxlix. 2.

Zion and Jerusalem appear to be sometimes employed in Scripture, figuratively, as interchangeable terms or nearly equivalents; but there is this difference between them, that Zion uniformly represents something unchangeable in its character. It is sometimes spoken of as suffering in a state of duress, but never as a thing subject to perversion; while Jerusalem is at times chargeable even with abominations, Ezek. xvi. 2. Zion may be an equivalent of the *new* or true Jerusalem, or vision of peace—the covenant of grace; but never a figure of the old Jerusalem, or Jerusalem in bondage,

spoken of by Paul as an equivalent of Mount Sinai, Gal. iv. 25. If Sion be figuratively put for the holy city, it must be so especially with reference to the foundation or rock upon which the city is built; as the site of a city remains the same, although the city itself may be taken, or even destroyed by an enemy. Mount Zion is thus, we think, a figure of the divine purpose of grace upon which the whole plan of salvation depends, and from which the element of atonement or propitiatory sacrifice (the Lamb) emanates, or rather upon which it stands. This divine will or purpose is something immovable; it may be misrepresented, but this spiritual Zion is in its own nature unchangeable; as it is said, Ps. cxxv. 1, "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever;" and Is. liv. 10, "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee."

As a mountain is an opposite of the sea, or of an abyss, so this Zion, or divine purpose of grace, may be taken as the opposite of a state of apprehension, resulting from the position of condemnation; corresponding with the contrast drawn by Paul between the two mountains, Zion and Sinai, Heb. xii. 18-22. The Lamb, (the Lamb of God,) as the only efficient cause of salvation, is the opposite of the beast: as the image of divine righteousness, by the imputation of which this salvation is effected, he is the opposite of the *image* of the beast; as the imputed righteousness of God is the opposite of the imaginary righteousness of *self*. The divine element of propitiation is sustained by the purpose of sovereign grace,—the Word, the *Logos*, the overcoming principle of perfect sovereignty. The Lamb rests upon a mountain or rock; he is indeed identified with it, as the Son is declared to be identic with the Godhead, (John x. 30,) Ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἓν ἔσμεν. Of both, the disciple may say with the Psalmist, "The Rock of strength and my refuge is in God. He only is the rock of my salvation." The believer thus contemplating the atoning sacrifice of Jesus—the great element of propitiation for sin—resting as it does upon the immutable principle of sovereign grace, and exhibited in the manifestation of God's love in Christ, may be said to see *in spirit*, with the apostle, the Lamb standing on Mount Zion.

'And with him an hundred and forty-four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads;'—or, as our Greek edition has it, *his name and his Father's name*. The difference is not material, as both we apprehend constitute one name, which the participle *περὶ ἑαυτῶν*, in the singular, also implies. This select number we presume to be that spoken of Rev. vii. 4; elements of doctrine peculiar to the combined testimony of the Old and New Testament revelations, (§ 175.) We do not suppose them to

represent disciples themselves, but the relation of these principles personified is analogous with that between the disciple and the divine purpose of mercy. The one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed, depend for the evidence of their truth upon the fact that, with the element of divine propitiation, they stand or rest upon the purpose of sovereign grace as upon the foundation afforded by a rock; the disciple depends for his hopes upon the fact, that the same element of propitiation, with all its attendant principles of redemption, rests upon this same sovereign purpose of free unmerited favour.

These principles of the gospel truth, as we conceive them to be, carry with them a certain prominent characteristic, equivalent to a name impressed upon the forehead of a human being. This characteristic is called a name of the Father, or of the Father and Son: we presume it to be the *new name* inscribed upon the pillar in the temple of God, Jehovah our righteousness, (§ 100;) every element of doctrine thus distinguished, possessing the prominent feature of tending to exhibit Jehovah as the only righteousness of his people.\*

Vs. 2, 3. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, [living creatures,] and the elders: and no man can learn that song but the hundred (and) forty (and) four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

Καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὡς φωνὴν ὑδάτων πολλῶν καὶ ὡς φωνὴν βροντῆς μεγάλης, καὶ ἡ φωνή, ἣν ἤκουσα, ὡς κιθαρωδῶν κιθαριζόντων ἐν ταῖς κιθάραις αὐτῶν· καὶ ᾄδουσιν ὡς ᾠδὴν καινὴν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου καὶ ἐνώπιον τῶν τεσσάρων ζώων καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων· καὶ οὐδεὶς ἠδύνατο μαθεῖν τὴν ᾠδὴν, εἰ μὴ αἱ ἑκατὸν τεσσαρακοντατέσσαρες χιλιάδες, οἱ ἡγορασμένοι ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς.

§ 327. ‘And I heard a voice,’ &c.—The voice from heaven, as in contradistinction to the voice from the earth, may intimate a revelation of truth in its proper spiritual sense. There is some difference here in the Greek readings. According to our common version, we might suppose two voices to be heard, one the opposite of the other: the voice as of many waters, and as of great thunder, or the language of denunciation; and the voice of harpers, or the language of praise. But, according to our Greek edition, the reading should be, ‘And the voice which I heard,’ that is, the voice from heaven, so strong and so intimidating, was as the harping of

\* If the seal of these select ones were described to be the impression of a *mark* only, we might suppose this characteristic feature to be that of exhibiting especially the love of God, as it is said God is love; or it might be the mark of a tendency to the formation of the grateful sentiments peculiar to a system of salvation by grace; but as the mark is stated to be a *name*, the name of God and also of his Son, we cannot apparently do otherwise than suppose it to be the name above referred to—being as such also an *opposite* of the *name* of the beast.



harpers upon their harps ; the same voice being the utterance of awful denunciation to the followers of the beast, and of praise and rejoicing to the followers of the Lamb. The voice of the God of Israel is said to be like the voice of many waters, Ezek. xliii. 2 ; and thunder is spoken of in Scripture (Job xl. 9) as the voice of God.

We suppose both the voice and the music of the harpers to have a prospective aspect, indicative of the nature of the revelation about being made : something of the character of a *grand overture*, or musical prelude, in a dramatic exhibition—something indicating a pause, and marking a distinction between the representations already made and those immediately succeeding.

‘ And they sung a new song,’ &c. ;—or, they chanted a new *ode*. It is not said what were the words of this song, but we may suppose it to comprehend in substance the glad tidings of redemption ;—perhaps the song of the Lamb, as distinguished from the song of Moses spoken of in the next chapter ; or perhaps these two constitute the same song. This song, however, was sung before the throne, and before the four living creatures, and before the twenty-four elders only. It is something taking place in the divine councils, but not yet supposed to be revealed on earth ;—something in accordance with the element of divine sovereignty, with the divine attributes symbolized by the four living creatures, and with the elements of the Old Testament dispensation, represented by the twenty-four elders. In effect, it may be what we commonly understand by the gospel itself, as revealed in the New Testament.

‘ And no man,’ or rather no one, οὐδείς, ‘ could learn that song ;’ neither man nor angel—no created being except the one hundred and forty-four thousand ; that is, no one could learn the ode so as to sing it : all who heard it might understand it, but only a certain class could sing it. Virtually, the song of redemption through the vicarious offering of the Lamb, can be sung only by the elements of revelation found in the Old and New Testaments, (the one hundred and forty-four thousand,) spiritually understood ; principles of the economy of redemption drawn from the sacred Scriptures, diffused as they may be amongst the mass of earthly elements, or found in a variety of human systems, but at last redeemed, brought out, and distinguished by their *seal* or characteristic feature. As with disciples none can feel the gratitude due to God for redemption but those who are sensible that this redemption is entirely of sovereign grace, so no principle of doctrine can contribute to the praise and glory of God, as the only Saviour, but such as is entirely unmixed with any principle of self-righteousness. These principles of doctrine are to be gathered only from the combination of Old and New Testament truths.

Vs. 4, 5. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, (being) the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

Οἱτοὶ εἰσιν, οἱ μετὰ γυναικῶν οὐκ ἔμο-  
λύνθησαν· παρθένοι χάρις εἰσιν· οἱτοὶ εἰσιν  
οἱ ἀκολουθοῦντες τῷ ἀρνίῳ ὅπου ἂν ὑπάγῃ.  
οἱτοὶ ἡγορεύθησαν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων  
ἀπαρχὴ τῷ Θεῷ καὶ τῷ ἀρνίῳ, καὶ ἐν τῷ  
στόματι αὐτῶν οὐχ εὐρέθη ψεῦδος· ἄμωμοι  
ἄρα εἰσι.

§ 328. 'These are they which were not defiled,' contaminated, &c.—The word rendered *defiled* carries with it the idea of something spotted; from *μολύνα*, to stain, or mark a white substance with another colour, (Donegan.) This appears to be a strong figurative expression of the perfect singleness and unmixed character of the principles represented by the one hundred and forty-four thousand;—their perfect freedom from amalgamation, not being mixed even with principles otherwise harmless. These elements are entirely pure, not admitting of any motive of service, other than that of gratitude for a free salvation. The figure is very much of the same character as that employed Rev. iii. 4: "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy," (§ 86.)

'These are they which follow the Lamb,' &c.—The Lamb is the element of propitiation: the way in which the Lamb goes is the way of salvation—the way of a *free* salvation. The principles represented by the one hundred and forty-four thousand follow in the same path; they are all consistent with the leading principle, and all, as it were, walk in his steps—all conform to the same rule, and confine themselves to the same track. A characteristic peculiar to sheep, and to which there may be some allusion in the figure here adopted: as doctrines expressing and admitting nothing, having a tendency inconsistent with the element of propitiation, the leading principle of the economy of salvation.

'These were redeemed from among men;'—men being a figurative expression for the whole mass of principles in the earthly system, or in all human systems. Out of this mass these one hundred and forty-four thousand truths are redeemed—brought out and manifested to belong to the heavenly system.

'The first-fruits,' &c.,—specimens; also the first of the harvest. As principles of gratitude for unmerited favour may be considered the first-fruits of salvation by grace, so these elements of gospel truths are specimens as well as first-fruits of all truths peculiar to God's plan of redemption; all having the same tendency to lay a foundation of love and gratitude towards the divine Benefactor and Giver of every good and perfect *gift*. As it is said, Rom. xi. 16, "For if the first-fruit be holy, the lump is also holy," so it may be

said of the disciple's faith, if its first fruits be gratitude and love to God, his whole subsequent conduct, springing from the same motive, will be of the same character.

'And in their mouth was found no guile.'—It was said of Nathanael, (John i. 47,) that he was "an Israelite, indeed, in whom there was no guile;" while the Pharisees were charged with being hypocrites, because they justified themselves before men, (Luke xvi. 15.) Nathanael, as well as his fellow-countrymen, were sinners; the difference between them consisted in the effort of the Pharisees to obtain a reputation for righteousness to which they were not entitled. So the disciple *without guile* must be one admitting, feeling, and confessing his sinfulness—making no pretensions to a righteousness of his own. Corresponding with this distinction, we may suppose the principles or elements of doctrine, personified by the one hundred and forty-four thousand, to be free from any tendency of the kind illustrated by this self-justification of the Pharisee. They are principles in which the total unworthiness of the subjects of redemption are admitted, and they are thus spoken of as without guile; or, as it is expressed in the Greek, in their mouth was found no falsehood;—nothing in their utterance countenancing a pretension on the part of man to any righteousness of his own.

In this respect these elements may be considered opposites of the two-horned beast. He, as a false prophet, misinterprets the language of revelation, so as to establish a kingdom, system, or mystery of self-righteousness; they, as elements of truth, sustain only the interpretation consistent with the kingdom, system, or mystery of God—*salvation by grace*.

'For they are without fault before the throne of God.'—Of created things, nothing can be said to be perfectly pure before God, or in the sight of God;—even the heavens, it is said, are unclean in his sight, and he chargeth his angels (his own messengers) with folly. These elements owe their purity to the all-cleansing principle of propitiation. From this principle, as we have seen, the motive of gratitude originates; and these elements of truth, like the multitude clothed in white, (Rev. vii. 14,) may be said to be thus pure and without fault, because they have been washed and cleansed in the blood of the Lamb. Change this arrangement, and no motive of action can be pure in the sight of God; the system of redemption by grace, through Jesus Christ, being as indispensable for the production of purity of motives of conduct, as for the salvation of man.

Vs. 6. 7. And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give

Καὶ εἶδον ἄλλον ἄγγελον πετόμενον ἐν μεσσημβρίᾳ, ἔχοντα εὐαγγέλιον αἰώνιον, εὐαγγελίσαι ἐπὶ τοῖς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶν ἔθνος καὶ γένος καὶ λαόν, λέγων ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ· φοβέ-



glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

ἡθῆτε τὸν Θεὸν καὶ δότε αὐτῷ δόξαν, ὅτι ἤλθεν ἡ ὥρα τῆς κρίσεως αὐτοῦ, καὶ προσκυνήσατε τῷ ποιήσαντι τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ θάλασσαν καὶ πηγὰς ὑδάτων.

§ 329. ‘And I saw another angel fly (flying) in the midst of heaven,’ or, rather, in the mid-heaven, (§ 205.)—Not merely another angel, for there is none mentioned immediately in connection with this, but another *mid-heaven messenger*; the term *another* directing our attention to the angel described Rev. viii. 13, the messenger of the three woes to the dwellers upon the earth: thus contrasting these two annunciations, the first of *wo*, the second of *glad tidings*.

The scene is here changed, a new object being contemplated by the apostle; and comparing the first part of the chapter with the fourteenth verse, we may suppose the vision of the Lamb on Mount Sion to be superseded by that of the Son of man upon the white cloud. We find in this chapter an account of six several angels or messengers: three, besides a voice from heaven, preceding, and three succeeding the appearance of the Son of man. The action of these messengers appears to correspond with that sometimes assigned to the chorus in the Greek drama, or with that of the herald, or of heralds, in the interval of a tournament, preceding a new series of extraordinary representations.

‘Having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth;’—or, as our edition of the Greek has it, to preach *upon*, or *concerning* (ἐν) those dwelling upon the earth, and concerning all nations. We are inclined to prefer this last expression, because it accords with the commission spoken of as to be given to the apostle, Rev. x. 11; where, as we have before remarked, ἐν conveys a similar meaning of *about*, or *concerning*, (§ 234.) According to either form of expression, the action of this angel amounts to a declaration that the gospel is now to be considered as being preached. The *gospel* is universally admitted to signify something of the character of *glad tidings*; and the main question is, whether that which is being declared is glad tidings to the dwellers or inhabitants of the earth, for these appellations are expressed by the same term in the Greek; or whether, if glad tidings to some other class, it may be so connected with an account of the fate of the dwellers upon the earth as to be termed something *concerning* them.

It is said in the preceding chapter (v. 4) that all the earth wondered after the beast, and worshipped the dragon and the beast; and, verse 8, all that dwell upon the earth, whose names are not in the book of life, shall worship him; and, verse 12, the false prophet causeth the earth, and them which dwell therein, to worship the first beast; and also (v. 15) he causeth those who would not worship the beast to be killed; and finally, (v. 16 and

17.) he causeth all, of every class, to receive in some shape the *mark* of the beast. Thus all the dwellers upon the earth are worshippers of the beast, and bearers of his mark, consequently they are all obnoxious to the wrath set forth by the third angel in the present chapter, (v. 9, 10;) they are all to be tormented or tortured with fire and brimstone, and to be without rest day and night. This certainly cannot be called glad tidings to the dwellers upon the earth, whatever they may be; but if we consider these dwellers on the earth, as we have done, principles or elements of an erroneous system tending to the establishment of an idolatrous worship in the heart, then this assurance of their destruction must be glad tidings to the opposite elements of truth, and this gospel, although not a gospel to them (the dwellers upon the earth) may be denominated a gospel or glad tidings *CONCERNING* them; as the account of the defeat and destruction of the besiegers of a city would be considered glad tidings concerning this hostile force, by all who felt an interest in the welfare of the city. As the woes threatened in the seventh chapter were woes only to one class of objects, so the message of this angel is a *gospel* only to another class. The action of these two mid-heaven messengers is also to be considered, not successive but contemporaneous; these gospel messengers being opposites of the beast and false prophet, and their messages being intended to counteract the mischievous influence of the two beasts from the beginning to the end of their course.

§ 330. ‘Saying with a loud voice,’ &c.—It is not said that the angel flying in the mid-heaven actually preaches the gospel at the time he is seen;—he has it to preach, and preparatory to his annunciation of it he utters the requisite admonition.

‘Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come.’—This is not the language of the gospel of peace, but it is the admonition of a preliminary qualification for hearing and receiving the gospel. “Come, (and) hear, all ye that fear God,” says David, “and I will declare what he hath done for my soul,” (Ps. lvi. 16.) He does not call upon those who have *no fear* of God, either because they esteem themselves sufficiently righteous to have nothing to fear, or because they do not believe in the existence of God, or in the certainty of a future state of rewards and punishments. It would be useless to set before these persons a way of salvation, of which they neither see the necessity nor the desirableness: to preach the glad tidings of redemption to such as these, would be *casting pearls before swine*, Matt. vii. 6. It is only to those fearing the justly merited vengeance of Him who has declared that he will by no means *clear* the guilty, that the revelation of what has been done for their souls is a message of glad tidings; it is not till the disciple experiences this fear, that he is prepared to receive this truth in the love of it. The worshipper of the beast, of course, so long as he is such, cannot have this fear, for his self-righteousness is, as he ina-

gines, his ample protection. So the elements or principles of the beast system of self-deification, are wholly inconsistent with this preliminary qualification required by the gospel plan.

‘And give glory to him,’—that is, give glory to God, and fear him, as the opposite of fearing and giving glory to the beast: seek the glory of God, instead of seeking that of *self*. This also is a necessary preliminary for a reception of the gospel. There are two systems of salvation, we may say, presented to the mind of the sinner already convinced of sin. One way by which the glory of his salvation appears to redound to himself; in which he may be contemplated literally as having worked out his own salvation, and must therefore be entitled to the glory of it. The other way is that in which God the Redeemer has wrought the work, and in which the glory must of necessity belong entirely to God. The disciple is not prepared to receive the gospel till he can deny himself in this particular; till he can place himself in his own mind in the position of the condemned malefactor; not only, as it were, crucified with Christ,—being in the same condemnation,—but feeling and confessing that he is so *justly*, as the reward of his own deeds; and such being the case, whatever glory may ensue from his deliverance, it cannot belong to himself. He can then feel no otherwise disposed than to give all glory to him to whom it belongs. When this is the case, he hears the gospel of salvation, through the merits of Christ, with joy; rejoicing that the glory of the work is God’s, and not his own. So, apocalyptically, every principle of doctrine belonging to the true plan of redemption must be manifested to be possessed of these characteristics: they must presuppose the fear of God, and premise that the glory of the sinner’s deliverance belongs entirely to his divine Redeemer; as also that every work, and every device of the creature, is to be performed from the *motive* of giving this glory to God alone.

‘For the hour of his judgment is come.’—The fear of God in the heart of man in its own nature depends upon the belief of a judgment to come; where there is no such belief, there can be no such fear. It is the belief of this that prompts the sinner to fly for refuge, while there is yet time, to the hope set before him in the gospel; and which implants in his mind the sentiment of gratitude for his escape, in proportion to his faith and hope. Here, however, we suppose the reference of coming judgment to be more especially to the divine discrimination between true principles and false; between those principles upon which God is served, strictly speaking, in purpose and motive, and those in which *self*, or some other idol, is the real object of service. The time of manifestation is now at hand, when this discrimination will be made, or rather exhibited to have been always made, by Him who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins. The difference between these two classes of motives (these different *counsels of the heart*) will then



be perceived by all : as it is said, Mal. iii. 18, "Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked ; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not."

'And worship him that made,' &c.—As if it had been said, instead of worshipping an object of adoration, risen from the sea, worship him who made the sea itself. The sea is his, and he made it, and his hands formed the dry land : consequently, whatever emanates from the sea, or land, or from any other portion of creation, is but the creature of his will, as he created, it is said, even the wicked for the day of evil. To worship or serve the beast, is directly worshipping and serving the creature, instead of the Creator. Instead of worshipping the beast, rising as he does from a vindictive element, affording no foundation for hope, worship him who is as able to save, as he has shown himself able to create.

Such we may suppose to be virtually the language of the gospel message during the whole period of the reign of the beast. We do not, however, confine this admonition to any particular place or time ; but wherever and whenever the beast is worshipped, there, or then, this warning voice is intended to be heard. The action of the angel is something going on in the *mid-heaven*. The admonition may be supposed not yet to have reached the earth, or not to be found in any part of the earthly system. If we view the mid-heaven, or second heaven, however, as the Levitical economy, or revelation of the Jewish people, this admonition of the angel may be said to be all found in that dispensation expressed in the first and great commandment : "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy strength," &c., (Deut. vi. 5.) In this respect the old economy may be said, like this angel, to have the gospel *to preach*, at the proper period of its development ; and in the meantime, to prepare the way for it by inculcating the disposition of mind necessary for its reception.

V. 8. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος δεύτερος ἠκολούθησε λέγων· ἔπεσεν, ἔτισε Βαβυλὼν ἡ μεγάλη, ἣ ἐξ τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς πεπότιζε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.

§ 331. 'And there followed another angel,' or, according to the Greek we copy, there followed another angel, a second.—This is probably the most correct, as the next heavenly message appears to be uniformly denominated the *third*. We may presume this angel followed in the track of the other ; the element or medium of his revelation, like that of the other, being the *mid-heaven*. The revelation is not yet made on earth, neither is it something entirely confined to the highest heaven, as in the secret purpose of the Most High. It may be partially revealed in a series of symbols equivalent to the middle heaven.

‘Saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city.’—This fall of Babylon is to be understood as having been revealed as yet only in the mid-heaven. It is an annunciation of the purpose of God. The words *that great city* are not found in all editions of the Greek; the reading of ours, it will be perceived, is, verbatim, *Fallen, fallen, is Babylon the great.*

It seems somewhat extraordinary that the first mention made of Babylon by name, in the Apocalypse, should be the annunciation of her fall, and this in a manner as if presuming her existence and her greatness to be familiarly known to the reader. The only *great city* previously mentioned is that in the street of which the bodies of the two witnesses remained unburied three and a half days, and of which the tenth part was destroyed by the earthquake, Rev. xi. 8, 13. We suppose this great city to be that which is now said to have fallen, and the term *great* to be applied in reference to its lofty pretensions.

Babylon was not only a great *city*, but it also gave its name to a kingdom or empire, and in this respect we may suppose the apocalyptic Babylon to be an equivalent for the *kingdom* of the ten-horned beast;—the annunciation of the fall of Babylon being equal to announcing the overthrow of the kingdom of the beast. We have already noticed some correspondence between the blasphemous character of the beast and the lofty pretensions of the monarch of Babylon, prior to his temporary expulsion; as also a correspondence between the image of his erecting, and the image of the beast. If we suppose the false prophet to discharge the functions of the astrologers, magicians, and principal advisers of Nebuchadnezzar, the identity of the kingdom of Babylon, as a figure, with the kingdom of the beast, and consequently with the *great city* Babylon of this revelation, will be perhaps sufficiently made out.

The apostle had been contemplating Babylon (the Babylonish kingdom) in her prosperity—the ten-horned beast in full power. Impatient at this *prosperity of the wicked*, he may be supposed to have exclaimed, with the souls under the altar, Lord, how long? In answer to this interrogatory, the heavenly vision shows him that the fate of this idolatrous system is already decided. In the divine counsels Babylon—the kingdom of the beast—has already fallen, but the account of the manner of her fall is reserved for a subsequent part of the narrative.

The name Babylon signifies confusion, mixture, as universally admitted. The Asiatic city of this name derived its appellation from the tower and city in its vicinity, the building of which was defeated by the confusion of tongues; on which account the yet unfinished city received the name Babel, בָּבֶל, Greek σύγχυσις, (Trom. Index. Heb. and Chald.,) Latin, *confusio sive commistio*, (Leusden.) We may suppose the great city afterwards built to have grown out of the scattered materials of this abortive enterprise.

The account we have of the motive for erecting the immense building contemplated in the first instance, throws some light upon the character of the system represented by the figurative Babylon: "Come," said they, "let us build a city, and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a *name*, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth," (Gen. xi. 4-6.) Their design was that of perpetuating their own *name*;—their only end in view was their own glory: one of the earliest typical illustrations of the folly and impiety of that blasphemous principle of self-exaltation in man, which prompts him to go about to promote his own honour and glory, instead of seeking to glorify the name of Jehovah. This folly and impiety was manifested too by a people just saved from destruction—a people owing their existence entirely to a gracious act of divine mercy,—the *ark* by which their ancestors had been preserved amidst an overwhelming deluge; as if the Christian, snatched as a brand from the burning, and scarcely saved by the merit of his Redeemer's atonement, should ascribe the glory of his salvation to his own works, and should thenceforth be occupied with exalting the reputation of his own *name*.

The ancient Babylon, although erected in a plain, was especially remarkable, according to Herodotus and others, for its immense walls and artificial mounds, its hanging gardens or paradises, and imitation hills; (v. Calmet;) so extraordinary, that even the account of them, as handed down by ancient heathen historians and geographers, appears to be fabulous. The whole structure of the city was an opposite of that of the city of David upon Mount Zion. The defences of Babylon were entirely the work of men's hands: a combination of brick and slime, the foundations of which were in the dust, or upon the sand; the whole figure being an opposite of Zion, a rock, the material and the formation of which was immediately the work of a divine Creator. Such we suppose to be the composition of the doctrinal system spiritually called Babylon—a system of works; a confused mixture of the supposed merits of man with the merits of Christ; a city, the opposite of that of which it is said, her walls are salvation, and her gates are praise; a system emanating from the self-righteousness and selfishness of the human heart, having no end in view but that of making a name for man, or in other words, that of glorifying *self*; and yet nominally a Christian system, with an admixture of some portion of the elements of Christian faith;—all its elements, however, so confused and heterogenous, as, when carried out, to prove eventually the instruments of their own dissolution: every one, like the builders of Babel, speaking a different language; agreeing in nothing but the purpose of self-exaltation, of promoting the glorification of *man*. The system symbolized by Babylon being identic with that represented by the kingdom of the beast, we may consider the two symbols convertible; the mystery heretofore con-



templated as the reign of the beast being now, by a change of figure, about to be exhibited as a city.

§ 332. ‘Because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath’ (or rather of the *rage*) ‘of her fornication.’—Babylon, as a figure, is an opposite, as we shall find, of the Bride or Lamb’s wife—the new Jerusalem. The system represented by Babylon, we suppose to be an opposite of that represented by the marriage union—the *great mystery*, alluded to by Paul, Eph. v. 32. The mixed character of this Babylonish system is accordingly symbolized by the promiscuous and adulterous intercourse of an abandoned harlot—a criminal indulgence carried to such an extreme as to be appropriately termed a madness or rage; the original *θόρυς* being a term applicable to a vehemence of passion, whether of desire or anger, (Donne-gan Lex.) The figure appears to be that of a harlot seducing her followers by means of an intoxicating drink; the nations having drunk the wine, become the victims of the artifices of Babylon. The true wine we suppose to be the atonement of Christ—the water of purification converted by the power of the Redeemer into the wine of joy—the *good wine* of the marriage feast, (John ii. 10.) The cup of Babylon is an opposite of this—her wine is adulterated; her cup is a cup of mixture. Bearing the name of wine, it has its pretensions to the exhilarating qualities of a provision for the pardon of the sinner; but, as a mixture of abominations, (Rev. xvii. 4,) we may suppose it to represent an atoning provision, composed principally, if not altogether, of pretended human means of propitiation.

The nations we take to represent supposed powers or subordinate systems of salvation—nations of the *earth*, being such powers or elements of the *earthly* system. These powers or elements adopt the means of atonement proposed by the system of Babylon, being led away by the plausibility of her propitiatory scheme, and are thus represented as participating in her cup, and consequently, as a matter of course, becoming the victims of her delusive errors. Systems of salvation, perhaps of various sects and denominations adopting the pretended means of atonement peculiar to the harlot system, become in effect identified with that system; the atoning provision of any doctrinal system being perhaps that leading feature which characterizes its whole tendency.

“The cup of blessing which we bless,” says Paul, (1 Cor. x. 16,) “is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?” In other words, “The real, the spiritual cup of blessing—the atonement of Jesus, represented by the sacramental cup—is this not the element of eternal life, identifying us in God’s account with his beloved Son?” So we may say of the opposite cup of abomination of Babylon, Is it not the pretended element of propitiation furnished by the blasphemous principle of *self*; and is not its tendency that of destroying our only hope of salvation, by identifying every system

of faith adopting it with a spiritually adulterous system; thus causing the members of Christ, in a spiritual sense, to become the members of an harlot? (1 Cor. vi. 15.)

The effects of the fall of Babylon may represent those of the destruction of this mischievous system of error, especially in reference to the element of atonement. This system once destroyed, and its peculiar error exposed, the other systems represented by the *nations* may be supposed susceptible of being brought back, as it were, to a renewal of their allegiance to God and the Lamb. As the reason given, that Babylon is destroyed because she had thus led the nations astray, implies that after her fall this will no more be the case, so we suppose it to be with the doctrinal systems of professing Christians generally. However erroneous in some respects, the correction of their views on the subject of the *atonement* may result in a correction of every other error of a kindred nature. A very slight acquaintance with the religious views of a variety of denominations must be sufficient to convince any one that the error of Babylon, such as we have supposed it to be, is not confined to the system of a single sect, or even to the doctrinal views of a limited number of *churches*, in the ordinary acceptance of that term.

Vs. 9, 10, 11. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive (his) mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος τρίτος ἠκολούθησεν αὐτοῖς, λέγων ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ· εἴ τις προσκυνῇ τὸ θηρίον καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ καὶ λαμβάνει χάραγμα ἐπὶ τοῦ μετώπου αὐτοῦ ἢ ἐπὶ τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ· καὶ αὐτὸς πίεται ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ, τοῦ κεκρασμένου ἀκράτου ἐν τῷ ποτηρίῳ τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ, καὶ βασανιθήσεται ἐν πυρὶ καὶ θείῳ ἐνώπιον τῶν ἁγίων ἀγγέλων καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου. Καὶ ὁ καπνὸς τοῦ βασανισμοῦ αὐτῶν εἰς αἰῶνας αἰῶνων ἀναβαίνει, καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἀνάπαυσιν ἡμεῖς καὶ νυκτὸς οἱ προσκυνοῦντες τὸ θηρίον καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ, καὶ εἴ τις λαμβάνει τὸ χάραγμα τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ.

§ 333. ‘And the third angel followed them.’—This third angel followed in the track of the other two—that is, in the *mid-heaven*. The revelation is of the same character, in this respect, as the others.

We have put the contents of these verses together, because they are all the language of the same third angel—the publication of the same decree; this decree pointing out, as we conceive, the virtual operation of the system of the beast; which operation we find exhibited in the subsequent chapters.

‘Saying with a *loud* voice.’—The second angel or herald declares only a fact, and accordingly there is no particular stress laid upon the *tone* of his

voice. The first and third heralds proclaim a command or a decree : the first enjoining the fear and worship of God, the last proclaiming the penalty of the opposite worship of the beast. Both of these, therefore, speak with a *loud voice*, as announcing admonitions requiring special attention.

‘If any man worship the beast,’ &c.—Here we perceive two influences in operation simultaneously : one, as described in the last chapter, insisting upon the worship of the beast, and actually causing all to receive his mark ; the other prohibiting this worship, and denouncing those who are guilty of it, &c. Apparently all the dwellers upon the earth, excepting only the *sealed ones*, are obnoxious to the penalty.

‘The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath (rage) of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation.’—Here the wine of God’s fury or vehemence, appears to be contrasted with that of Babylon, implying that the worshippers of the beast, and bearers of his mark, are also participators in the wine of the harlot. The wine of God, we suppose to be the *good wine*, the unadulterated cup of divine atonement ; but the wine of the *wrath* or fury of God, must be the whole vengeance of divine justice : the wrath treasured up against the day of wrath—the indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish—the righteous judgment of God spoken of, Romans ii. 3–9. This also is said to be an unmixed cup, and as such, it is an opposite of the mixed cup or adulterated wine of the harlot more particularly described in the seventeenth chapter, where also the intimate relation between Babylon and the seven-headed monster is fully set forth.

‘Poured out without mixture.’—That is, undiluted. The cup of the harlot, like the *philtres* of ancient times, is made strong by a deleterious mixture of drugs. The cup of divine wrath is the stronger from the absence of any element capable of moderating the vehemence of its action. The antithesis is minutely complete, showing the consequence of a participation in the elements of the mixed system of self-righteousness to be an exposure to the unmixed visitation of divine justice—the unmitigated vengeance of legal requirement.

The word translated *poured out*, *νεκτασμένον* from *Κεράρειναι*, signifies to pour out for the purpose of mingling, (Rob. Lex. 371.) Thus the wine of divine vehemence is represented as poured out untempered into the cup of judicial indignation ; a figure corresponding with that which we meet with, Ps. lxxv. 8 : “For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red ; it is full of mixture, and he poureth out of the same : but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.” The two elements of vehemence and indignation render the cup a cup of mixture, although the vehemence itself is unmingled.

This latter mixed cup of indignation is evidently an opposite of the *good wine* above alluded to—the atonement of Christ making glad the heart of



man. Christ suffered—the *just for the unjust*. He took the cup of divine indignation, mingled with the undiluted vehemence of offended justice. It was not till he had taken the *wine mingled with gall*, that he said of the great work which he came to accomplish, *It is finished*, (John xix. 30.) His followers drink of the cup which he was called to drink, (Mark x. 39,) by being identified with him in God's account, and thus participating by *imputation* in the merit of his satisfaction of the claims of infinite justice; by *grace* the mixed cup of the Saviour's sufferings—the water of purification—becoming to the disciple the pure wine of the marriage feast.

Such was the cup alluded to by Jesus himself, when he “prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine be done,” (Matt. xxvi. 39.) The vicarious sufferings of the Lamb have saved his followers from participating *directly* in this mixture of divine vehemence and indignation; but to those who reject his proffered salvation—who rely on a propitiation of their own, or upon works of righteousness of their own doing, the cup of wrath remains, upon their own principles, to be drunk unmingled. Analogous with this necessary consequence of rejecting the blood of the covenant, the wrath of God is represented, apocalyptically, as administered to the self-righteous elements of the kingdom of the beast—principles serving to elevate the beast, to exalt his name, and to give him (*self*) the glory due to Jehovah.

§ 334. ‘And he shall be tormented [tortured] with fire and brimstone;’—fire representing the revealed word, (Jer. xxiii. 29,) and sulphur the element of perpetual action, (§ 224, note.) The worshippers or principles of the beast are figuratively spoken of as undergoing an unceasing and eternal trial or torture; as slaves amongst the ancients were sometimes put to the rack, when their evidence was required, to extort from them the truth.

‘In the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb;’—that is, in their sight, (§ 310,) as contradistinguished from a thing done in the sight or estimation of man. The false prophet performed great miracles, even causing *fire* to come down from heaven *in the sight of men*, and deceived the dwellers upon the earth by means of the miracles which he had power to do in *the sight of the beast*, Rev. xiii. 13, 14. To human apprehension, and in the estimation of *self*, the power of this false interpretation is very great, and its trial as by the fire of the revealed word very wonderful; but not so in the estimation of Him who “seeth not as man seeth;” (1 Sam. xvi. 7;) “for that which is highly esteemed amongst men is abomination in the sight of God,” (Luke xvi. 15.) Opposite to this is the wonder-working power of the Most High—the principles of the beast's kingdom, or followers of the harlot, are to be tried as by fire in the sight of the holy angels and of the Lamb, although this trial may not be simultaneously submitted to human contemplation.

‘And the smoke of their torment [torture] ascendeth up for ever and ever.’—As smoke is the evidence of the existence of fire, so the smoke here alluded to is the evidence of the trial actually being undergone by these false principles. The smoke *ascendeth* up; the verb is in the present tense, and in fact this trial is ever going on in the sight of God and the Lamb. So we may say, ever since the Scriptures were first given to men, this trial has been conducted in the sight of those attending to the subject, just in proportion as the law and the testimony have been applied to the imaginations of man. The operation of the revealed word, in decomposing (analyzing) and exhibiting the vanity of human aspirations, as well as of the earthly *basis* of man’s pretensions, founded in the dust, may be compared to this smoke or evidence of the trial in contemplation.

‘And they [the worshippers of the beast] have no rest day nor night.’—It is a remarkable characteristic of the principles of self-exaltation and self-dependence, that they are incompatible with the nature of *rest*. As he who has his own righteousness to establish—whose eternal life depends upon his own works—should literally give neither sleep to his eyes nor slumber to his eyelids, till he has accomplished this all-important enterprise. Even if his right hand, or his right eye, or any other member of his body were the occasion of his offending against the law, consistently with his own views, he should deprive himself even of the power of committing sin. The worshipper of *self* can have no *rest*, no respite in this respect, unless he deceive himself by bringing the requisitions of infinite justice down to the standard of his own imperfect performance of duty.

§ 335. Employment is not always labour :

“Absence of occupation is not rest ;  
A mind quite idle is a mind distressed.”

That which characterizes labour is the motive of action. A slave in certain countries labours six days in the week under the galling lash of a taskmaster ; on the *seventh*, he is allowed to employ himself for his own benefit, as he pleases. This, perhaps, is all he knows of a *Sabbath* ; on this day he may perform voluntarily double the amount of work required of him on any other day of the week ; still the seventh day is with him a *day of rest*. While acting under the taskmaster, he is stimulated to the performance of what is required of him by the motive of fear : when enjoying comparative liberty, he acts voluntarily ; although more than equally diligent, he *rests*. The hired man, serving for wages, *labours* ; he is actuated by the mercenary motive of expectation of recompense, or the fear of losing it. The adopted son, serving his father and benefactor from a motive of gratitude alone—a thankful return for benefits received—*rests* : however

assiduous his service, this service is happiness; he is neither in the position of a slave, nor in that of the mercenary expectant of wages.

Under the law, man *labours*; he is stimulated to the performance of his duty by the motive of *fear*, the fear of eternal punishment; or, he is actuated by the mercenary motive of *wages*, expecting to be *compensated* by the Almighty for whatever he may be enabled, even by the same almighty power, to perform: eternal happiness is with him something to be received in *payment* for his works. In either case, the position is one of *labour*; the element of *rest* cannot find a place in it.

Under the gospel, the disciple of Jesus trusts for eternal life to the redemption wrought out for him—the atoning sacrifice of the Lamb of God—the justifying power of the *imputed* righteousness of God himself. He contemplates his future happiness as the reward of his Saviour's merits, not of his own; these merits of Jesus constituting an inheritance of which endless bliss is the reward; confiding in his possession of that which will secure to him this benefit, he is stimulated to action in the service of his divine Benefactor by the voluntary motive of gratitude. *He rests*; however active his engagements, his position is that of *rest*; there is no room here for the operation either of the servile motive of *fear*,\* or of the mercenary motive of desire of gain. It is evident that one who depends upon his own *works*, cannot enjoy this position of *rest*; it is as wholly inconsistent with the service of *self*, as the principle of this *rest* is incompatible with the nature of the principles represented by the worshippers or subjects of the beast. The exhibition of the want of this element in the principles of the beast's kingdom, may be contemplated as a result of the fiery trial previously spoken of, to which they are exposed. These principles, in their own nature, are devoid of *rest*; but this does not appear till they are tried by being subjected to the test of the revealed word. Thus far, too, the nature of these erroneous principles is announced only in the mid-heaven; the same development is not yet supposed to be made upon the earth.

Vs. 12, 13. Here is the patience of the saints: here (are) they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven, saying

Ἦν δὲ ὑπομονὴ τῶν ἁγίων ἐστίν, οἱ τηροῦντες τὰς ἐντολάς τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τὴν πίστιν Ἰησοῦ. Καὶ ἤκουσα φωνῆς ἐκ τοῦ οὐ-

\* "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," (Ps. cxi. 10.) Perhaps we may say it is only the *beginning*, as we have already noticed that this fear is a necessary preparation for a favourable reception of the gospel, (§ 330;) the true *wisdom* consisting in the exercise of faith in God's plan of salvation, and the end of the commandment, as also the end of wisdom, being *charity*, (love or gratitude towards God the Saviour.) We are assured, 1 John iv. 18, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." Wherefore, as it is stated Heb. ii. 15, it was the purpose of Christ in suffering, that he might "deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to *bondage*."



unto me, Write, Blessed (are) the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

θανοῦ λεγούσης· γράψον· μακάριοι οἱ νεκροὶ οἱ ἐν κυρίῳ ἀποθνήσκοντες ἀπάρτι· ναί, λέγει τὸ πνεῦμα, ἵνα ἀναπαύσωνται ἐκ τῶν κόπων αὐτῶν· τὰ δὲ ἔργα αὐτῶν ἀκολουθεῖ μετ' αὐτῶν.

§ 336. ‘Here is the patience,’ &c.—This is an exclamation similar to that in the preceding chapter, both in the tenth and eighteenth verses:—“Here is the patience and the faith of the saints;” and “Here is wisdom.” That is, we may suppose, herein is matter for the exercise of faith and patience. This we are to consider the conclusion of the third angel’s annunciation; but it may have a prospective as well as a retrospective allusion; as the angel may be supposed to know what the “voice from heaven” is about to declare. Apparently the *saints*, like the souls under the altar, (§ 162,) are still supposed to be waiting the final manifestation of the truth. For the encouragement of their patience, they have the assurance that the elements of falsehood are destined to destruction, while on the other hand they are about to be assured of the blessedness of dying in the Lord: the certain privation of *rest* with one of class of objects, and the certain enjoyment of it by another.

‘Here are they that keep the commandments of God.’—“All these,” said the young man, (Matt. xix. 20,) “have I kept from my youth;” and yet he went away sorrowful, when called upon to part with his abundance for the benefit of others. It is doubtful whether he really had the love of God, and certainly he could not be said to have loved his neighbour as himself; he was probably, however, as near being *perfect* as the most self-righteous of the present day, who value themselves upon keeping the commandments. We do not suppose those contemplated in this passage to be literally human beings, who themselves fulfil every jot and tittle of the law, and on that account may be said to “keep the commandments.”

The word ὁδὲ (here) is not repeated in all editions after the word saints; with it, there would appear to be two classes spoken of: the saints, and those that keep the commandments;—without it, the last term may be used as in apposition to the first. Here is the patience of the saints, *that is*, of those that keep, &c. The saints or holy ones we have before supposed to be (apocalyptically) elements or principles, holy, set apart, or as we may say, *consecrated* to that system of the worship of God, and of the salvation of man, which is the opposite of the system of the beast. These *principles* keep the commandments and the faith of Jesus, because they are strictly in conformity with the purport of the law and of the gospel. They constitute the same class of principles (personified) as those spoken of, Rev. xii. 17—the remnant of the woman’s seed, against which the dragon went to make war; the remnant keeping the commandments of God, and having

the testimony of Jesus, (§ 291 ;) the war made upon these saints or this remnant, and the flood from the accuser's mouth, intended to carry away the woman, (the true covenant,) being both exhibited in the power given to the ten-horned beast, and the influence possessed by the two-horned beast. Both of these have their period of action, but this action is declared to be limited, and the end of these evil influences is proclaimed by the third herald: which limitation and end appear to be assigned as reasons for a *patient waiting for Christ*; corresponding with the admonition of Paul to the Thessalonians, that the day of Christ must be preceded by a *falling away*, but that this falling away is to result in the development of the mystery of iniquity; which mystery, or *that wicked*, as he terms it, is to be *consumed* by the spirit of the mouth of the Lord, or brought to an end by the word of revelation *as by fire*, 2 Thes. ii. 3 and 8.

§ 337. 'And I heard a voice from heaven.'—A revelation from the heavenly display; virtually, the language of the divine plan of redemption: something not found in the earthly exhibition of that plan.

'Write.'—A direction, the opposite of that given when the seven thunders uttered their voices. Those thunders, indicative as they were of a judicial denunciation, were not intended apparently to be permanent in their utterance; the apostle was therefore forbidden to *write* what was announced by them (§ 229.) Here, however, as in all that pertains to the covenant of grace, there is a permanency in what may be termed the general proposition laid down; it is therefore to be *written*, recorded, never to be forgotten. As it was expressed of old by the patriarch, in allusion to the same purpose of divine mercy, and as if offering a reason for his own faith and patience: "O that my words were now *written*! O that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though now my reins be consumed within me," (Job. xix. 23-27.) So also it is said, Is. xlix. 13-16, "Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. But Zion said, The LORD hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, she may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have *graven thee* [written thee] upon the palms of my hands."

'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth;'—or, verbatim, *Happy the dead, those in the Lord dying, henceforth*. This happiness does not consist merely in being dead, but in dying *in the Lord*.

The difference of position, whether living or dying, being all-important—in Christ or *out of* Christ. “Know ye not,” says Paul, “that so many of us, as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized *into his death*?” And again, “For if we be planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection,” (Rom. vi. 3, 5.) And again, Rom. vii. 4, “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ;” and Gal. ii. 19, 20, “For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God; I am crucified with Christ.” So, Col. ii. 20, “Wherefore, if ye are dead *with* Christ from the rudiments of the world, [the elements of the legal system,] why, as though living in the world, [as still under a dispensation of works,] are ye subject to ordinances?”

There is a baptism in a natural sense, and a baptism in a spiritual sense; the first being a figure or symbol of the last. So there is a death and a burial in a natural sense, and a death and a burial in a spiritual sense; the first being here also a figure of the last. In divine estimation, the disciple is accounted to be identified with his Saviour; to have participated in his death, sufferings, and crucifixion; which operation in the mind of God seems to be contemplated by the apostle as a *baptism* into the death of Christ;\* a being dead with him—a being crucified with him. So those who die in the Lord may be those who, while they are yet living in a natural sense, are accounted, in divine estimation, to have been crucified with Christ; *in him*, having paid the penalty of the law, and being now *in him* delivered from the law. In this then consists the blessedness of being *dead in Christ*; that it is a position in the sight of God resulting from his own act of *grace*, in which the disciple is exempt from the curse or penalty of the law; not that he is thenceforth without a *rule of conduct*, but that his motive of conduct, as we have already described, (§ 324,) is changed; for as *in Christ* he is dead to the law, so *in Christ* he is raised to a new position of life—a position of freedom; at the same time, one of grateful obedience.

There are, it is true, in a spiritual sense, those who are dead in trespasses and sins, even while they live in a natural sense, but these are not the dead *in* Christ; they are *out of* Christ, whether living or dying; and in that position they must be subject to all the curse and penalty of legal condemnation; but the lamentable character of their case renders the blessedness of the opposite class the more striking. “Blessed,” says the Psalmist, “is he whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;” a blessed-

\* To this spiritual baptism allusion is made 1 Peter iii. 21, not, (as the apostle apparently intends to be understood,) the cleansing of the flesh in a natural sense, but that spiritual cleansing, through the imputed identity of the disciple with Christ, in his death, burial, and resurrection, which results in the cleansing of the conscience towards God, συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερωτήματα εἰς θεόν.



ness which would hardly call for notice, if those were equally favoured whose transgressions were not forgiven, and whose sins were not covered.

‘From henceforth.’—This seems to have a reference to what had been just before declared of the destruction of the elements of the beast’s kingdom, or rather of the manifestation of their torture, and want of rest; the consequence of which exhibition is the contrary blessedness of the elements of the kingdom of the Lamb, those that die in the Lord; the exposure of error being a means of developing the truth. The voice from heaven utters a general proposition, applicable to all who die *in the Lord*, (whether principles or human beings.) Apocalyptically, it may apply to the elements of the gospel, personified as disciples, and taken as opposites of the worshippers of the beast and his image. Thus the manifestation of the torture and want of rest, peculiar to one class of doctrinal elements, is the means of bringing to light the characteristics of blessedness and rest peculiar to the other class.

§ 338. ‘Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may *rest* from their labours.’—This language of the Spirit seems to be uttered as a *response* to that of the voice from heaven; perhaps we may say, the voice from heaven is the written revelation, which shows, as in the writings of Paul, from which we have been quoting, the blessedness of being dead in Christ; while the language of the Spirit is the spiritual construction to be put upon the written revelation, showing that the blessedness of those that die in the Lord consists in the change of position before adverted to. They are happy in being taken out of a position of labour, and being placed in a position of rest—not in a state of inactivity, as in the grave, but by this death itself being translated to a new state or position of life, or of being—as the apostle says, Rom. vi. 8, “Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him;” to be dead with or in Christ implying this consequent life with or in him—dead indeed unto sin, or as to the transgression of the law, but alive unto God—that is, living unto God, as those devoting themselves from a sentiment of gratitude to his service. This we suppose to be the *rest* of the dead in Christ; for the rest of mere inaction could hardly be termed blessed. A state of happiness or blessedness, implies a state of life capable of enjoying such happiness; so, if to be dead in Christ is to be blessed or happy, to be dead in Christ is also to be alive with him; as it is said, (Col. iii. 3,) Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. In fine, to be dead in Christ is to be brought into the position of *rest*; and to be brought into the position of rest, is to be brought into that of grateful devotion to the service of our heavenly Benefactor.\*

‘And [but] their works they follow with them.’—The position of

\* To this *position of rest* we suppose allusion to be made, Heb. iv. 9: There remaineth, therefore, a *rest*, (*οαρητις*), a sabbatism, (a Sabbath, in a spiritual sense,) for the people of God;—a position of exemption from the *labour* of fulfilling the law,

spiritual rest in Christ is illustrated by the condition of natural rest enjoyed by the Israelites in the promised land, which however was only a type or symbol of that which we have been contemplating; "For if," says Paul, (Heb. iv. 8-11,) "*Joshua* had given them rest, (spiritual rest,) then he (God) would not have spoken concerning another day (of rest) after those things; consequently, there remaineth a *sabbatism* (a spiritual position of rest) to the people of God: for he (Christ) entering into his rest, rested from his works, (of redemption,) as God also *rested* from his works, (of creation;) let us therefore (as followers of Jesus, the spiritual Joshua) hasten (by faith) to enter into that *rest*, (of Christ,) that no one fall, in or by an unbelief:"\* corresponding with the typical want of faith of the ancient Hebrews—a type or example just before enlarged upon. Such we believe to be the proper construction of the original; the labour or striving contemplated by the apostle being an act of faith, enabling the disciple to apprehend his true position. Otherwise than this, he is exhorted to cease from his own work; that is, to cease from going about to establish his own righteousness,—to cease, not from action, but from acting from servile and mercenary motives. Accordingly, in the passage before us, the works of those *dying in Christ*, and resting from their labours, *follow* them, instead of going, as it were, before them. They do not constitute a *condition precedent* of their enjoyment of this privilege of identity with Christ; they are the thank-offerings resulting from it. The subjects of this *rest* are not slothful or unfruitful: they thus judge, that if one died for all, "he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again," (2 Cor. v. 15.) Their works evince their gratitude, and this evidence of their gratitude is the evidence of their faith, corresponding with symbolized by the Levitical Sabbath—symbolized also, we may say, by the setting apart of the *seventh* day from the creation of the world. So, as the Israelites could not enter into the *rest* of the promised land because of unbelief, the disciple cannot enjoy the *rest* we have described in Christ, without faith in him, (trust in his imputed merits,) as the only means of salvation. As the Israelite was prohibited even the gathering of sticks on the Sabbath, so the follower of Christ is required to renounce even the least dependence upon any work of his own, as a means of entering into the spiritual rest, (the position of rest,) provided by the work of the Redeemer. A mixture of pretensions in this respect, is of the same character as that symbolized by the mixture of abominations in the harlot's cup; the mixed composition of garments of different materials, the spotted skin of the leopard, &c., &c.

Jehovah will not divide with another the glory of man's salvation; and to this point the symbolic representations of Scripture appear especially intended to direct our attention.

\* Heb. iv. 8-11. *Εἰ γὰρ αὐτοῖς Ἰησοῦς κατέπαυσεν, οὐκ ἂν περὶ ἄλλης ἐλάλει μετὰ ταῦτα ἡμέρας. Ἄρα ἀπολείπεται σαββατισμὸς τῷ λαῷ τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ὁ γὰρ εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὴν κατὰπαυσιν αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς κατέπαυσεν ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ, ὥσπερ ἀπὸ τῶν ἰδίων ὁ Θεός. Σπουδάζομεν οὖν εἰσελθεῖν εἰς ἐκείνην τὴν κατὰπαυσιν, ἵνα μὴ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τις ὑποδείγματι πέσῃ τῆς ἀπειθείας.*

the proof of faith alluded to by the apostle, James ii. 18: "Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works." Such we suppose to be the operation of faith with enlightened followers of Christ; and, apocalyptically, we take the elements of doctrine opposed to those of the beast's kingdom to be of a corresponding character.

V. 14. And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and upon the cloud (one) sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ νεφέλη λευκή, καὶ ἐπὶ τῇ νεφέλῃ καθήμενον ὅμοιον υἱῷ ἀνθρώπου, ἔχων ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ στέφανον χρυσοῦν καὶ ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ ὄξυς.

§ 339. 'And I looked, and behold;' or, I saw, and lo!—This turn of expression is the same as that used at the commencement of the chapter; it appears to indicate a new scene, or a certain change of scene. The apostle had been contemplating the action, and had heard the messages of three angels or heralds, uttering their respective annunciations,—the approaching development of the gospel mystery, the fall of Babylon, and the final trial of the worshippers and servants of the beast. That vision had closed with a didactic enunciation of a general proposition, an inference from what had just before been revealed; something in the manner of an epilogue or commentary—the moral of the narratives and descriptions just finished. In which view, perhaps, it may be taken out of the general rule as applicable to principles, so as to apply it directly to the circumstances of disciples; as if it were said, '*Hear the sum of the whole matter: Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, &c.*' A new spectacle now presents itself.

'A white cloud.'—A very different exhibition from that which engaged the apostle's attention, when he stood upon the sand of the sea. Clouds we have supposed to be symbolic of the figurative language and illustrations of Scripture revelation, (§ 18.) Dark clouds are such as scarcely indicate the Saviour; the rays of the Sun of righteousness being hardly perceptible in the picture presented. The legal dispensation itself may be considered a cloud of this description. A bright cloud, however, we may consider such a symbolical exhibition as admits of strong indications of the light of divine righteousness; indications of the approaching manifestation of him who is a sun and shield. The gospel, so far as it is expressed in figurative language, may be considered a bright cloud. This Apocalypse, misunderstood, or but imperfectly understood, may appear a dark cloud; whereas, whenever it is properly and spiritually understood, it will appear indeed a *white cloud*.

'And upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man.'—One appearing in the form of a man; as he who, although so identic with God that he thought it not robbery to profess himself equal with the Father, took upon himself the form of a servant, and became in fashion as a man, (Phil. ii. 8.)



The same form was seen, Rev. i. 13, in the midst of the golden candlesticks. It was seen too in the fiery furnace by the king of Babylon, Dan. iii. 25. The same form was also seen by Daniel in the night visions; one like the Son of man, to whom was given dominion and glory, and a kingdom—an everlasting dominion not to pass away, and a kingdom never to be destroyed, Dan. vii. 13 and 14. This form also was seen by the prophet to come with the *clouds* of heaven. Of the same it is said, Rev. i. 7, “Behold, he cometh with *clouds*; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.” So Jesus himself speaks of his own coming, Matt. xxiv. 30: “And then shall appear the sign of the *Son of man* in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the *Son of man* coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory;” and Luke xxi. 27, “And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory.” So it was said of the same Son of man, Acts i. 11, when *a cloud* received him out of the sight of his apostles, “This same Jesus, which taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner (that is, in *a cloud*) as ye have seen him go into heaven.” Perhaps we may say, as in a natural sense he was taken up from his followers in a material cloud, so in a spiritual sense he is to manifest himself in the cloud of symbolic revelation: being manifest the second time to the eye of faith without sin unto salvation, as *the Lord our righteousness*, the overcoming principle—the principle of sovereign grace. The apostle may be said to have seen in vision this second coming of the *Son of man*, as he unveils himself in effect in this Apocalypse from amidst a cloud of figurative representation.

§ 340. ‘Having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.’—This crown, it will be observed, is of the kind allotted to conquerors at the games, as a token of victory. The crown is of *gold*, as the composition of the spiritual crown is of truth. The truth, as it is in Jesus, wherever it is seen, manifests him to be the victor, having led captivity captive, Eph. iv. 8; as in the great contest between Michael and the dragon, or between the element of propitiation and that of accusation. That contest in heaven has terminated, but the corresponding contest on earth, between the elements of truth and falsehood, remains to be brought to a close. The termination of this latter contest is now about to be exhibited under the figure of a harvest and vintage; the destruction of the kingdom of the beast, the fall of Babylon, and this harvest and vintage, being figures nearly equivalent in their results.

The portion of the vision in this and the subsequent verses of this chapter, appears to correspond with the description given of the *end of the world*, Matt. xiii. 37–43, except that, in that account, the Son of man is said to send forth his angels to reap; while here, he is exhibited as coming himself

as a reaper to the work. We suppose the allusion to be the same in both cases, although represented under different figures. The Son of man is the efficient power in this harvest, although he may act through the instrumentality of his angels or messengers. The manifestation of the truth, as before remarked, wherever and whenever it takes place, must be the efficient cause of the destruction of opposite errors, (tares,) although a variety of instrumentalities must be engaged in operating the destruction.

The instrument (the sickle) shows the nature of the work for which it is to be employed. The sharpness of the sickle, like the sharpness of the sword out of the mouth of him who stood amidst the golden candlesticks, shows the material of the instrument to be the same; the sword of the Spirit, and the sickle of the Spirit, being alike the instruments of destroying error; the sickle of the Spirit having the further quality of reaping truth. The whole appears to be a figure of the action of the spiritual understanding of revelation, in discriminating between truth and error; this figure being equivalent to that of the trial by fire, by which the pure gold of truth is to be separated from the wood, hay, stubble, and dross of error.

One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. We are not obliged to suppose the process of this harvest confined literally to a single day. As we suppose it to be effected by the application of the spiritual sense of the written word to every element of doctrine; so it may have been already in operation wherever the revealed word has been circulated, in proportion as that revealed word has been rightly understood.

V. 15, 16. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ, κραζὼν ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ τῷ καθήμενῳ ἐπὶ τῆς νεφέλης· πέμψον τὸ δρεπανόν σου καὶ θερίσον, ὅτι ἤλθεν ἡ ὥρα θερίσαι, ὅτι ἐξηράνη ὁ θερισμὸς τῆς γῆς. Καὶ ἔβαλεν ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τὴν νεφέλην τὸ δρεπανον αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν, καὶ ἐθερίσθη ἡ γῆ.

§ 341. 'And another angel came out of the temple,' &c.—We have already contemplated the temple as that disposition or arrangement of the principles of religious truth, in which the worshipper is enabled to come to God; this temple arrangement affording a position in Christ in which, and in which only, God can be acceptably served;—coming unto God in Christ, and coming unto God in his temple, being nearly equivalent terms. An angel or messenger coming out of this temple, as here described, may indicate a virtual call of this arrangement (a voice from the temple, Is. lxvi. 6) for a separation of truth from error; as if, in the language of the Psalmist, It is time for thee, O Lord, to work; for they have made void thy law, (Ps. cxix. 26.) The true worship of God renders the development about being made especially requisite; and the call for it is made upon Him (the Son of

man) who, while sojourning on the earth, declared the time to be coming when men should no more worship God in certain localities, or in certain structures of man's erection, but *in spirit and in truth*; who also himself purged the earthly temple of those by whom it was occupied for mercenary purposes.

‘Thrust in thy sickle,’ or rather, send forth thy sickle, *πεμψον τὸ δρέπανόν σου*;—sending forth the sickle being an equivalent for sending forth the reapers. Whatever the instrument, the occasion calls for immediate action. The outer court of the temple may be supposed to be at this time in possession of the Gentiles, as also the city; the beast and the false prophet are in full power; the fall of Babylon is determined upon in heaven, but on earth she is still, as represented in the first part of the seventeenth chapter, sustained by the ten-horned beast.

‘The time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe;’\* the tares of error, and the good wheat of truth, have reached their maturity. It is time to gather out of the kingdom of Christ “all things that offend,” or that *cause to offend*, (*πάντα τὰ σκάνδαλα*, stumbling-blocks in the way of believers.) This call was made in vision eighteen hundred years ago, and would seem hardly yet to have been attended to, unless, as we apprehend, the process be continually in operation. With those who leave this world, the change wrought by the harvest no doubt is immediate and entire, as they enter a state of existence where they are to know as they are known, (1 Cor. xiii. 12;) but on earth the process is gradual. It began with the first preaching of the gospel, and the separation of the tares from the wheat has ever since been being made.

‘And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.’—The peculiar propriety of this figure of a harvest may be illustrated by considering that wheat is the principal material of bread, and that bread, as the chief aliment of life, is a symbol of the righteousness or merit necessary to secure the disciple's eternal life. The bread of life is the righteousness of Christ, and the spiritual *wheat* may be considered elements of truth, representing this righteousness of Christ to be, as it is, the bread of eternal life. The opposite of this is to be found in all those elements of false doctrine which represent the means of eternal life as consisting in some other merits than those of Christ. The manifestation of the Son of man as the Conqueror—the *Overcomer*—together with the spiritual sense of revelation acting as the sharp sickle, is in its nature the means of

\* Dry ripe, fully ripe, *ξηρόανθη*. The erroneous system, represented by the earth, with all its variety of errors, has reached its utmost extreme of abomination: as it is said, (Jer. iii. 33,) “The daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor; it is time to thresh her. Yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come.”



exhibiting the folly of any dependence upon pretensions of human merit. Thus, by an exhibition of the truth as it is in Jesus, the sharp sickle of the Son of man is sent forth, and the earth is reaped. There is something instantaneous in the operation as here described, and so there is in effect; as God said, "Let there be light, and there was light:" no sooner is the truth fully manifested than the tares of error are reaped, and ready for destruction. Perhaps in this particular a peculiar stress may be laid upon the word *thee*, in the 15th verse—the time is come for *thee* (the Son of man) to reap—although this form of expression is not found in all editions of the Greek: it appears however in keeping with the circumstance, that the Son of man, the Lamb on Mount Zion, has now manifested himself: it is for this reason that the time has come especially for *him* to reap.

Vs. 17, 18. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, ἔχων καὶ αὐτὸς θερίανον ὀξύ. Καὶ ἄλλος ἄγγελος ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου, ἔχων ἐξουσίαν ἐπὶ τοῦ πυρός, καὶ ἐβόησεν κραυγῇ μεγάλῃ τῷ ἔχοντι τὸ θερίανον τὸ ὀξύ, λέγων· πέμψον σου τὸ θερίανον τὸ ὀξύ καὶ τρυγήσον τοὺς βότρυας τῆς ἀμπέλου τῆς γῆς, ὅτι ἡκμασαν αἱ σταφυλαὶ αὐτῆς.

§ 342. 'And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven,' &c.—There seems to be here a distinction between this temple and that mentioned in the fifteenth verse; as if one were the temple on earth, and the other that in heaven. Perhaps we may say, that the first is in a state of duress; its angels or messengers cry, as it were, for help. The other is the heavenly temple, corresponding with the Jerusalem from heaven, and consequently is able to send aid, instead of asking for it. In any case, however, they are both temples in a spiritual sense, and as such they constitute something relating immediately to the worship of God.

The angel or messenger from the heavenly temple, we may presume to be charged with all that pertains particularly to this worship "in spirit and in truth." His weapon is also a sharp sickle; an instrument of the Spirit, or a spiritual interpretation.

'And another angel came out from the altar.'—This altar apparently corresponds with the temple mentioned in the fifteenth verse, that of which the court is in possession of the Gentiles; like Jerusalem in bondage calling for deliverance.

'Which had power over fire;' or, according to the Greek, had power over *the* fire, that is, over the fire of the altar;—fire being the instrument of trial, and the fire of the altar trying in effect every thing consumed upon the altar, as in the case of the burnt offerings under the law:—the fire of the

altar being on this account especially under the care of Aaron and his sons—a perpetual fire, symbolic of the perpetual trial to which the services and the sacrifices of the worshipper are subjected. The functions of this angel may be supposed to consist in trying the *propitiatory* sacrifices ; in other words, he is charged particularly with watching over the element of atonement. The loud cry of this angel may, accordingly, be considered as occasioned by the erroneous views which have crept into the earthly system on the subject of the atonement, or propitiation of Christ.

The worship of the temple may be divided into two parts : that which belongs to the actual service of God without reference to the *past*, typified perhaps by the daily sacrifice, and that which belongs to atoning for past transgressions ; as under the Levitical arrangement the worshipper bringing his atoning offering had, besides, his daily sacrifice to attend to ; and as he who attended to his daily sacrifice might still have neglected to bring his offering of atonement for some previous transgression.

The first of these, the actual service of God, is characterized by the *motive* ; an act of worship arising from an impure motive, as of a desire to serve *self*, resembling the offering of an unclean animal—the *cutting off a dog's neck*, (Is. lxvi. 3.) Here the impure service, or *abomination*, corresponds with that self-righteousness which is the opposite of the true bread of life ; accordingly, the angel having charge of this part of the temple service calls for the *harvest* of the earth—a harvest resulting in the destruction of these self-righteous elements.

The atoning sacrifice demands the offering of that *which is prescribed*, as the only acceptable propitiation. The Israelite was required to offer a *male* lamb, on certain occasions, as such a sacrifice. The propitiatory offering of the Christian is the Lamb of God ; the blood of this Lamb, the atonement of Christ, being the only propitiation acceptable to God. He who professes to propitiate divine favour by any other atonement than this, is as if he offered swine's blood, (Is. lxvi. 3,)—the blood of Christ representing the true atonement, the blood of swine that of an entirely opposite character. Blood is typically represented by the juice, or blood, of the grape ; and by metonymy, in the present passage the grape itself is put for the juice of the grape. As wine, or the blood of the grape, represents the element of atonement, the grapes of the vine of the earth are put for the atonement professed to be offered by the earthly system. The vine of the earth producing these grapes, or this earthly pretension of atonement, is thus an opposite of Christ, who declares himself to be the *true vine*. The earthly vine, with its grapes, like swine's blood, represents an element of propitiation, the opposite of that prescribed ; it is abomination in the sight of God. In this respect it may be considered a symbol parallel with that of the beast, aiming as it does to occupy the place of the Saviour in a propi-

tiatory system of redemption. This error on the subject of propitiation has now reached its extreme; this vine of the earth is fully ripe; and as it is the part of the angel having charge of *the fire* of the altar to attend to the purity of the sacrifice, (whether this sacrifice consists in the burnt offering, or the shedding of blood represented by juice of the grape,) so it is by this angel that the cry is made, as from the altar, for an immediate exercise of the sharp sickle in the hands of the angel issuing from the heavenly temple. The action of this last sickle corresponds in natural things with the process of the *vintage*, which is well known always to succeed the wheat harvest. Apparently, there is a similar order of succession in the growth and in the correction of errors upon the subject of divine worship: the self-righteous man first esteeming his daily ordinary performance of duty to his God perfect and acceptable; and next, when convinced of sin in this respect, supposing himself capable of working out an atonement for his past deficiency by some propitiation of his own. This last error is now also described as having reached its maturity: the grapes of the vine of the earth are fully ripe. Not that they are fit for use, for the vine of the earth is *the vine of Sodom; its grapes are grapes of gall; its clusters are bitter; its wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps.*

Vs. 19, 20. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast (it) into the great wine-press of the wrath of God. And the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horse-bridles, by the space of a thousand (and) six hundred furlongs,

Καὶ ἔβαλεν ὁ ἄγγελος τὸ δρέπανον αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ ἐτρίγχεσε τὴν ἄμπελον τῆς γῆς, καὶ ἔβαλεν εἰς τὴν ληρὸν τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν μέγαν. Καὶ ἐπατήθη ἡ ληρὸς ἕως θέν τῆς πόλεως. καὶ ἐξῆλθεν αἷμα ἐκ τῆς ληροῦ ἄχρι τῶν χαλινῶν τῶν ἵππων, ἀπὸ σταδίων χιλίων ἑξακοσίων.

§ 343. 'And the angel thrust in his sickle,' &c.—The call for the sharp sickle was to gather the clusters of grapes. Vintagers are careful, in gathering the grapes of a good vine, not to injure the plant itself. According to the law of Moses, even the clusters of grapes were not to be entirely stripped from the vine; some were to be left for the poor, the fatherless, and the widow. But here is a vine, the fruit of which is not fit to be given away; a plant yielding such fruit that it is not to be suffered to grow again; it is entirely cut up, *root and branch*, (Matt. iv. 1.) The whole vine is gathered and cast altogether into the great wine-press. The figure is a strong one, showing the entire destruction awaiting the fallacious system of propitiation, represented by this vine.

'And cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God.'—The wrath of God must be that element of divine justice which requires the infliction upon the offender of a punishment coextensive with the magnitude of the transgression. Transgression of the law of God is a crime of infinite magnitude; the retribution which it calls for, must be *infinite*—the punish-



ment must be eternal. This punishment is usually spoken of in Scripture as the loss of eternal life, and life in Scripture is spoken of as *blood*; blood being termed the *life* of the animal. Divine Justice is thus represented as requiring the blood—the eternal life—of the transgressor; a shedding of blood, equal to the magnitude of the sins committed, (Heb. ix. 22.) The blood of the animal is also represented by wine, the blood of the grape; and we may, accordingly, take the wine-press of divine wrath to be a figure of the power of the law in requiring satisfaction for the transgressions of the sinner, (a penalty equal to the crime.) The vine of the earth, on the other hand, may be supposed to represent the proposed means of atonement, peculiar to the earthly system. The clusters may be characterized by some variety, but they are all the growth of the same plant; all proposed human means of atonement originating from the same self-dependent spirit of error. The moment of trial has now come: divine justice, with the law as its instrument, exacts the penalty of sin—the forfeiture of eternal life. The earthly system, on the other hand, offers all that it can produce—every device of earthly means of atonement entering into the heart of man. The whole of these are brought to the test: the wine-press of divine justice must be satisfied. To show that it requires all, and more than all, that the earth can furnish, not merely the clusters, but the whole Vine is cast into the press. But the wine-press still remains unsatisfied; it is as capable of exercising its power over another vine, or over any number of vines, of the same character, as it was before. The exaction of infinite justice is infinite.

The wine-press is sometimes supposed to be put for the *vat* or receptacle of the liquor. But we do not think this to be the figure here intended, as it would then seem that the vat or press was overflowed, and, of course, more than satisfied. We suppose the term *press* to be confined here strictly to the power by which the juice is expressed from the grape, and the whole country round to be contemplated as one vast receptacle or vat for the product of the vine. As if it were said, So infinite is the penalty to be paid for the transgressions of a world of sinners, that the whole earth would scarcely be sufficient to receive the *blood* (life) exacted by the law.

‘And the wine-press was trodden without the city.’—The city we suppose to be the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem; for the vision is in heaven, or in the mid-heaven, where Babylon, that *great city*, is already contemplated as fallen. In the heavenly Jerusalem, or *vision of peace*, there is no wine-press of wrath. This is not an element of the holy city; “her walls are salvation, and her gates are praise.” Within the city, that is, within the covenant of grace, all is peace and reconciliation: justice has there been satisfied. Out of it there is no peace,—and out of it, accordingly, the wine-press of wrath is trodden.

§ 344. ‘And blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horses’ bridles;’—or, rather, unto the bits of the horses’ bridles; the term *χαλῶς* signifying the mouth-piece, or that part of the bridle where the bit is placed, (Donnegan.) Wine-presses in Eastern countries were usually trodden by men; but as cattle and horses were also in those countries frequently employed in treading out the grain, it is easy to imagine, that in an immense wine-press, such as is here contemplated, horses rather than men would be employed: it is to the bits or mouth-pieces of these horses that the blood of the grape of this earthly vine is represented as reaching.

‘By the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs;’—about equal to two hundred English miles, if the furlong (*στάδιος*) be the Roman stadium: if it be the Greek, somewhat less. It is not said, whether the press be equal to an area of sixteen hundred *square* furlongs, or whether it be a square of sixteen hundred furlongs on each side. In either case, the extent is immense for a wine-press; and the whole description may be taken as hyperbolical, representing in fact the infinity of satisfaction required by the law as a propitiation for sin. A liquid like the juice of the grape, reaching to the mouths of the horses, and covering a space equal to two hundred square miles, or perhaps forty thousand square miles, capable of seeking everywhere its own level, can be considered only as a figure of some immense indefinite quantity, showing the immensity of the requisition which may be said to absorb it. Besides this, whatever the quantity be, the vine is still the vine of the earth; its wine is not the good wine of a Saviour’s atoning blood. On the other hand, we may notice that however immense the dimensions of this wine-press, they are but small in comparison with those of the heavenly city, as given at the close of this book, (Rev. xxi. 16,) covering an area of one hundred and forty-four millions of square furlongs, or two million two hundred and fifty thousand square miles. Besides which, the depth of the blood extorted by the wine-press of wrath, although reaching to the horses’ bridles, is far exceeded by the altitude of the holy city—twelve thousand furlongs!—its height as well as its length and breadth being equal; affording the assurance that, whatever be the magnitude of the retribution demanded by the attribute of divine justice, the provision of infinite mercy in the covenant of grace, affording the means of propitiation, far exceeds it: the breadth and length, and depth and height of the love of Christ passing knowledge, (Eph. iii. 18, 19.)

Still we suppose there is some further significance to be attached to the numerical sign of *sixteen hundred*. There must be some reason why the *initial* number sixteen should be selected rather than any other. We do not find any thing of a typical or symbolic character to compare with it directly; but if we suppose, as above, the area of the wine-press to be sixteen hundred square furlongs, and of a quadrangular figure, the sides of this

square must be equal to forty furlongs each ; the number sixteen hundred being the result of forty multiplied into forty, affording us a key to the allusion ; as we have, some time since, noticed the number one hundred and forty-four to be the product of twelve multiplied by twelve, indicating something resulting from the joint operation of the twelve patriarchs and twelve apostles, or from the Old and New Testament revelations.

The most remarkable uses of the sign *forty* in the Scriptures, are associated with something of a penal import, although this cannot be said to be uniformly the case. *Forty* kine composed a part of the propitiatory offering selected by Jacob to appease his justly offended brother, Gen. xxxii. 15 ; *forty* stripes constituted the punishment required by law, to be inflicted upon the man *worthy to be beaten*, Deut. xxv. 2, 3 ; Moses was *forty* years old before he was permitted to go to the deliverance of his brethren, Acts vii. 25 ; the Israelites bore their iniquities *forty* years in the wilderness, Num. xiv. 34. So the Israelites are said to have been afflicted in bondage four hundred years, Gen. xv. 13, and Acts vii. 6 ; and Esau came to be avenged of his brother Jacob with a force of four hundred men, Gen. xxxii. 6. So, apparently, there were with David four hundred men when the opportunity was offered him of taking vengeance upon Saul ; but David, the type of him that was to come, withheld them. The deluge, the visitation of divine wrath, was brought upon the earth by a rain of *forty* days and *forty* nights' continuance, Gen. vii. 12. Moses was *forty* days and *forty* nights in the mount, on the occasion of receiving the legal code, the first tables of the legal covenants written on stone, Deut. ix. 9 ; and after the destruction of these first tables, he again fell down before the Lord *forty* days and *forty* nights, during which time he did neither eat nor drink, on account of the sins of the people, Deut. ix. 9, 18, 25. So we find in the New Testament that Jesus himself fasted *forty* days and *forty* nights in the wilderness, where he was with the wild beasts, and where he endured the temptation of Satan, before commencing his earthly ministry ; and after his resurrection he was again *forty* days and *forty* nights with his disciples, prior to his ascension and glorification. We do not attach importance to these terms of *time*, merely as such, but we think there is peculiarity enough in this use of the numerical sign *forty*, and its cognate four hundred, to suppose it to be, wherever we find it mystically employed, (even as the root of its square,) indicative of something of a judicial character, directing our minds to the requisitions of the law ; and thus, when applied to the dimensions of the wine-press, exhibiting this vintage process of the Apocalypse as a representation of the action of divine justice upon all the elements of human systems of propitiation ; showing the utter inadequacy of every earthly means of atonement, and pointing to the necessity of an infinite provision.



## RETROSPECT.

§ 345. The whole of this chapter appears to be of an introductory character, affording us a view of what may be said to be seen and known in heaven, before it is seen to operate in the earth.

The Lamb on Mount Zion, with his hundred and forty and four thousand attendants, is the Lamb seen amidst the throne, (Rev. v. 6,) with his seven horns and seven eyes, undertaking the opening of the sealed book—an undertaking of which he alone was worthy. He has accomplished the work, the last seal having been opened when the seven angels received their seven trumpets, Rev. viii. 1, 2; and the last trumpet has already sounded, Rev. xi. 15. He may now be contemplated as receiving the glory, and exercising the power resulting from his own work.

The consequences we may say of the opening of the sealed book are, the exhibition of the character and power of the *spirit of error* pervading the earthly system on the one hand; and on the other, the manifestation of the true position, power, and glory of the Redeemer; the Lamb, once seen as it had been slain, being now contemplated as on the Mount Zion, victorious in heaven, although this victory is not yet developed in the earthly view of the same mystery. The disciple, in the midst of the discouragements to which his faith may be subjected, while he witnesses the temporary triumph of the beast and the false prophet, with this portion of the Apocalypse before him, may say in the words of the patriarch, “I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand in the latter day upon the earth,” *Mount Zion*.

A consequence of the appearance of the Lamb upon Zion, is a conviction of the necessity of a preparation of mind for receiving the glad tidings of salvation. The time for developing the true means of safety has arrived. Now, therefore, is also the time for exercising that fear of God, and that disposition to ascribe all glory to him, which will prompt the sinner to fly to the stronghold provided; and to receive with ready acquiescence, and with joy and gratitude, the word of truth; that his hope and his refuge is in God alone, the Rock of his strength, and the God of his salvation. A consequence of these developments is the further manifestation that the reign of error is at an end. With the preparative fear of God in the heart, and the disposition to give to Him the glory of the work of redemption, (as of the Lamb now contemplated,) the influence of the mercenary system of self-righteousness ceases: Babylon is fallen, and the iniquitous tendency of her principles is fully perceived. A consequence of all, thus far developed, must be the conviction that the elements of the kingdom of the beast, (the principles upon which his power is exercised, and by which it is sustained,)

must necessarily be exposed to an eternal trial in the presence of Him who searcheth the heart, and trieth the motives of action ; and that they are, further, principles of servile labour wholly inconsistent with the element of *rest* : consequently, those who depend upon them, and act upon them, must be themselves without *rest* ; all their conduct, their inward thoughts, or their outward actions, being characterized by the slavish principle of *fear*.

Hence the inference, (in the nature of things,) pronounced as by the voice of God, the creator of all things, is, that the only true blessedness or happiness, for time and for eternity, consists in being *found in Christ*, (Phil. iii. 9,)—identified with him, partaking with him, by imputation, of the full satisfaction made to the law ; with him, also, rising to a new position of being and of action—a position of active service, but the service of a grateful heart, as of the Lord's *freedman*.

§ 346. The developments of the last three angels or messengers may be said to be directed especially to matters concerning the welfare of the disciple,—demonstrating his only true ground of hope, by exhibiting the fallacy of expectations of an opposite character. His doctrinal views are now supposed to have reached the position of *rest in Christ*—a position in which he casts his *care*, even for eternity, upon Him who careth for him ; trusting for the bread—the means of eternal life—to him who supplieth the fowl of the air and the beast of the forest with food ; and looking for a robe of righteousness and a garment of salvation to Him who clotheth the lily of the valley and the grass of the earth with all their varieties of beauty. The believer is now supposed to have no interest of his own in contemplation, so far as pertains to anxiety for the future ; but his views still need correction in respect to the mode in which he is to serve or worship his heavenly Benefactor. He has learned the true way of salvation ; he has now to learn the true way of worshipping God. For this end, the developments of the next three messengers are directed especially to an exhibition of the certain destruction awaiting the errors insinuating themselves into the earthly scheme of Christian doctrine upon the subject of this worship. The salvation of the sinner called for the previous revelations ; the temple worship (the service of God) now calls for similar revelations.

The Lamb once slain now appears in a different character : instead of standing upon Mount Zion he reveals himself in, or upon, a white cloud from heaven. He is seen in all the glory of his own divine righteousness, *white as the light* ; or, if we prefer it, sustained by the glory, or by the righteousness itself which constitutes this glory. He appears as a conqueror, and the first exercise of his power is to purify the *temple service* : to purge away, and to eradicate or destroy, the mercenary principles of the earthly system pretending to the worship of God, but really tending to the worship of the beast. For this work he appears armed with the

sharp sickle, the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, (the revealed word, in its proper spiritual sense.) This work is divided into two parts, as the errors to be *destroyed* are divided into two classes : the first, is that which pertains to the principle upon which God is to be served ; the last, that which belongs to a just view of the only propitiatory offering acceptable to a Being of infinite justice, and *sovereign* in the exercise of his mercy. The eradication of the first class of errors is illustrated by the harvest of a field equal to the whole earth, of which the *yield* is supposed to be a mixture of wheat and tares. The earth is said to be reaped ; the result of this reaping is not stated. We are left to judge of it by inference ; comparing the performance of the operation with what was predicted of it, apparently, by the Son of man himself when manifest in the flesh, (Matt. xiii. 37-42.) The result of the *vintage*, however, which was not there alluded to, is here given. In the errors of the earthly system on the subject of the atonement, there does not appear to be even a mixture of good with the bad ; the whole vine is cut up, and, with all its clusters and branches, is subjected to the judicial action of the wine-press of wrath.

Such seems at least to be the heavenly scheme of the revelation about to be pursued ; the announcement of these six heralds or messengers being somewhat in the nature of a *prologue*, bearing, to the remainder of the Apocalypse, the relation of that portion of a dramatic composition to the subsequent representation.\*

§ 347. The worshipper of the beast, the deluded subject of the false prophet's influence, if permitted to contemplate the developments of this chapter in their spiritual sense, may exclaim, at the conclusion, with the prophet of Israel—"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, even the vintage is gathered, and we are not saved." The earthly system has exhib-

\* The everlasting gospel in possession of the first angel, is not directly preached. The glad tidings are not fully made known till we reach the last two chapters of the Apocalypse, where they are set forth under the figures of the Lamb's wife, and of the new Jerusalem. The particulars of the fall of Babylon are not given till we reach the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters, where this mercenary system is set forth under the figures of an abandoned harlot, and of a great commercial city ; and the relation of the final destruction of the power of the beast and the influence of the false prophet, is delayed till the close of the nineteenth chapter. The proclamations of the three first angels may be considered therefore as so many predictions, of the fulfilment of which, the subsequent narratives furnish an account. The purification of the temple service, shadowed forth in the latter part of this chapter, appears to be represented more particularly in the figure of the operation of the seven vials of wrath—the account of which we are to commence upon in the next chapter—the order of the fulfilment of these angelic predictions being thus exactly inverted : the relation corresponding with the first action is given last, and that corresponding with the action of the three last angels is given first.



ited all that it is capable of performing, and has been manifested to be entirely insufficient.

An operation analogous to these agricultural processes may be said to take place in the mind of every disciple of Christ, in proportion as he is brought to the knowledge of the truth : convinced of the exceeding sinfulness of his sins, of his own entire destitution of righteousness, and of the certainty of condemnation in the sight of God, he sees the whole *products* of his pretended merits cut up, as by the sharp sickle of the Holy Spirit. The harvest indeed is gathered ; but it proves to be a harvest of tares—a crop of thorns and thistles, (Gen. iii. 18.)

So with respect to the vintage, when the eyes of the convinced sinner are once opened to the insufficiency of any efforts of his own in providing an atonement, his *grapes*, like those of the vineyard described by the prophet, (Is. v. 2-7,) appear, even in his own estimation, to be wild grapes—without avail in satisfying the requisitions of the wine-press of infinite justice : his only hope is now in the work of him who has trodden the wine-press alone, (Is. lxiii. 3.)

As it is said in the prophets, in allusion apparently to the same process of conviction—the same manifestation of truth—"I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon, and Elealeh : for the shouting for thy summer fruits and for thy harvest is fallen. And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field ; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting : the treaders shall tread out no wine in their presses ; I have made their vintage-shouting to cease." (Is. xvi. 9, 10.) "Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the Rock of thy strength, therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange slips : in the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish : but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow." (Is. xvii. 10, 11.) "The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish." "The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, all the merry-hearted do sigh." "They shall not drink wine with a song ; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it. The city of confusion [Babylon] is broken down : every house is shut up, that no man may come in. There is a crying for wine in the streets ; [the vintage having failed ;] all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone. In the city is left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction:"—Is. xxiv. 4, 7, 9-12. "For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, [the elements of vindictive justice,] whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth [the grinders] of a great lion. He hath laid my vine waste,

and barked my fig-tree : he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away ; the branches thereof are made white." \* \* \* \* "The vine is dried up, the fig-tree languisheth ; the pomegranate-tree, the palm-tree also, and the apple-tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered : because joy is withered away from the sons of men," Joel i. 6, 7, 12.

The opposite of this picture of desolation and despair, resulting from a position of self-dependence, is to be found in that faith of the disciple who, trusting in the *justifying righteousness* of a divine Redeemer, (the finest of the wheat, Ps. lxxxi. 16,) and the *atoning sacrifice* of the Lamb of God, (the wine of Lebanon, Hosea xiv. 7,) is able to exclaim with the prophet, even under the conviction of his own infinite unworthiness, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines ; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat ; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls : yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation," Hab. iii. 17, 18.

## CHAPTER XV.

THE LAST PLAGUES.—THE SONG OF THE VICTORS.—  
THE TEMPLE SCENE.—THE COMMISSION OF WRATH  
TO THE SEVEN ANGELS.

V. 1. And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

Καὶ εἶδον ἄλλο σημεῖον ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ μέγα καὶ θαυμαστόν, ἄγγέλους ἑπτὰ ἔχοντας πληγὰς ἐπὶ τὰς ἐσχάτας, ὅτι ἐν αὐταῖς ἐτελέσθη ὁ θυμὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ.

§ 347. ‘AND I saw another sign in heaven,’ &c.—There are three signs (*σημεῖα*) in heaven, mentioned in this book of Revelation, of which that now before us is the last :—first, the *great* sign of the woman bringing forth the man-child ; second, the sign of the great red dragon ; and third, the *great* and *wonderful* sign of these seven angels having the seven last plagues.

The scene is still laid in heaven, and what we behold is to be considered something occurring in the counsels of the Most High ; the results of which on earth we are subsequently to be made acquainted with. There is some change, however, in the scenery presented. In place of the wine-press of the wrath of God, we have seven angels or messengers commissioned, as we shall see, to administer this wrath by seven different exhibitions ; the pouring out of the vials of wrath, about to be described, being equivalent to the operations of the harvest and vintage, with the spectacle of which we were presented at the close of the preceding chapter ; as, in a dream or vision of the night, one image unaccountably merges itself into another, and yet not without some traces of connection in the chain of ideas. This sign is denominated *great* and *marvellous*, as if to afford us the assurance that if the power at work on the side of falsehood, (the great red dragon,) were a sign of something of extraordinary import, the exhibition of the powers in operation on the side of truth—the truth of salvation by grace—is something still more worthy of our astonishment.

‘Seven angels having the seven last plagues ; for,’ &c. ;—or, according to the order of the Greek, with a little difference in the punctuation, Seven angels having seven plagues, *the last, because in them*, or by them, is com-



pleted or brought to an end (*ἐτελέσθη*) the vehemence of divine indignation. That is, in accordance with our general rule of interpretation, these plagues are called the *last*, because they are the last *illustrations* afforded by this book of the wrath or vehemence in contemplation; not that the action of the wine-press is the visitation of one wrath, or of one degree of wrath, and that of the seven angels of another, or of seven others; but they are all different modes of exhibiting the same truth. So the fearful picture presented at the close of the sixth chapter, is not that of a prior visitation of the wrath of God; for it is there said that the *great day* of his wrath is come. We apprehend the commotions there described correspond as illustrations with the actions of the harvest, wine-press, and these seven plagues.\*

V. 2. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image and over his mark, (and) over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

Καὶ εἶδον ὡς θάλασσαν ὑαλίνην μεμιγμένην πυρὶ, καὶ τοὺς νικῶντας ἐκ τοῦ θηρίου καὶ ἐκ τῆς εἰκότος αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ, ἑστῶτας ἐπὶ τῇ θάλασσᾳ τῇ ὑαλίνῃ, ἔχοντες κιθάρας τοῦ θεοῦ.

§ 348. ‘And I saw,’ &c.—Here again we have a scene similar to that of the intervention of a dramatic chorus; an exhibition furnishing a most striking contrast with those immediately preceding and succeeding it. As if to remind us that amidst all this awful display of divine indignation (judicial wrath) there is a class of objects which, like the family of the patriarch, and all that were with him in the ark, are preserved in perfect peace and security amidst the tumultuous and destructive elements around them; preserved too, essentially, not by any worthiness of their own, but by the position in which they are placed; as the believer, adopted in Christ, preserved by the covenant of grace, contemplates without alarm the denunciations of the law; exemplifying in his faith a fulfilment of the promise, (Is. xxvi. 3,) “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.”

‘As it were a sea of glass mingled with fire;’—or, rather, a sea of *crystal*. We associate with *glass* the idea of something brittle, fragile, not to be depended upon; but a sea of crystal, with all the smoothness and transparency of glass, has also in its solidity the essential quality of a rock: the sea of crystal here representing apparently a foundation, a basis of faith, corresponding with that before exhibited as the Mount Sion. As the sea, which never rests, became calm at the command of Jesus, so the element of divine wrath, terrible as it is to the sinner, becomes, through the propitiatory intervention of the Lamb of God, to the disciple not only a ground of hope

\* The word translated plagues, implies something of the character of wounds or bruises, as by the stroke or blow of a stick or cudgel: *πληγῇ*, from *πλήσσω*, to strike, wound, or hit; *πλήγανον*, a stick or cudgel.—(Donnegan.)

and an instrument of peace, but also a foundation for ascriptions of praise and thanksgiving.

Besides its other qualities, however, this sea was *mingled with fire*. As we suppose *fire* (the revealed word of God) to be the element of trying the character of doctrines submitted to its test, so we may suppose this crystal sea, mingled with fire, to represent the doctrine of atonement, either as having undergone this *test*, or as co-operating with the revealed word, in furnishing the basis of praise and thanksgiving alluded to. We are inclined to adopt the latter interpretation. The sea with its waves roaring, is changed by the power of the sin-atoning Lamb to a body of crystal. This body thus changed, in unison with the action of the revealed word, constitutes the basis upon which, as we shall see, the overcomers of the beast offer these songs of praise.

‘And them that had gotten the victory over the beast,’ &c.—To obtain the victory over the beast, is something which might be understood in a temporal or literal sense; but to obtain the victory over his *image*, and over his *mark*, and over the *number of his name*, can be conceived of in no other than a spiritual and doctrinal sense. Doctrinal errors may be supposed to possess characteristics equivalent to these marks. These errors are overcome by the power of countervailing truths: these truths are gathered from the joint and interchangeable action of the Old and New Testament revelations; for which reason they are represented by the one hundred and forty-four thousand elements, bearing the seal of the living God;—the same elements having been described in the last chapter, as standing with the Lamb upon Mount Sion—a position, as we have just now remarked, equivalent to that of standing upon a sea of crystal. We are still unable to point out definitively what is to be understood by the beast and his various characteristics; but we may form some idea of them, by knowing more of those which have obtained the victory over them. As yet, however, it has only been intimated to us that such a victory has been obtained. We have not had the particulars of it. It is something already past in the divine counsels; but it remains yet to be exhibited to the sight of mortals;—the account of the battle and the victors being deferred for the present, (vid. Rev. xix. 19, 20.)

Our last account from the earth (Rev. xiii.) left the beast in full power: a power to continue forty and two months, the term assigned for the reign of the beast; this exhibition of the *chorus* in heaven leaving us to take it for granted that the time has elapsed, and that the reign of the beast has ceased.

The earthly account, which gives us the particulars of these things, being resumed in the sixteenth and following chapters, we must here consider ourselves as having advanced beyond the period of the great battle; enjoying in prophetic anticipation a view of the rejoicing of the victors.

These victors are represented as having “the harps of God,” (not the harps of man.) As the harp was the instrument amongst the Hebrews especially for singing the praises of God, we suppose these harps of God to be elements of divine truth pertaining especially to his praise, as the God of our salvation—truths virtually resulting from the action of the doctrinal elements represented by the one hundred and forty-four thousand; for we assume these victors to be identic with the chosen number, bearing the Father’s name in their foreheads.

Vs. 3, 4. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous (are) thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true (are) thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for (thou) only (art) holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

Καὶ ᾄδουσι τὴν ᾠδὴν Μωϋσέως τοῦ δούλου τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τὴν ᾠδὴν τοῦ ἁγίου, λέγοντες· μεγάλα καὶ θαυμαστὰ τὰ ἔργα σου, κύριε ὁ Θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ· δίκαιαι καὶ ἀληθινὰ αἱ ὁδοί σου, ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν ἐθνῶν· τίς οὐ μὴ φοβηθῇ, κύριε, καὶ δοξάσῃ τὸ ὄνομά σου; ὅτι μόνος ὁσῖος ὅτι πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ᾄδουσι καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν ἐνώπιόν σου· ὅτι τὰ δικαιώματά σου ἐφανερώθησαν.

§ 349. ‘And they sing the song of Moses,’ &c.—Here there is a marked distinction between Moses and the Lamb—the servant as in contradistinction to the Son: as it is said, John viii. 35, 36, “The servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed;”—corresponding with the difference between the temporary character of the Mosaical dispensation, and the permanent and enduring character of that of the gospel.

These are also two different songs; although they are both sung by the same elements of truth, accompanied with the same instruments of praise. There are two songs of Moses particularly mentioned in the Old Testament: the song of praise for deliverance from Egyptian bondage, Ex. xv. 1–19; and the song of remembrance, contrasting the mercies of God with the hardness of the hearts of the people, Deut. xxxii. 1–43. The songs of Moses were songs of judgment as well as of deliverance, setting forth, as they did, the dealings of divine justice in the first instance with Pharaoh, and subsequently with the children of Israel. The song of the Lamb, we may presume to be the *new song* referred to Rev. v. 9, showing the worthiness of the Lamb to develope the mystery of salvation, (the sealed book,) especially on account of the redemption wrought out by his atoning blood. This new song, then, sung by the living creatures and the elders, being perhaps in substance the same song as that afterwards said to be sung by the one hundred and forty-four thousand upon the mount; the latter being so much a *new version* of what was before termed a *new song*, that it appeared to be entirely new, and is therefore styled, *as it were* a new song, (ὡς ᾠδὴν



καὶ ᾠρ,) Rev. xiv. 3;—this latter version being also of that character that it can be learnt or sung only by the conjoint action of the Old and New Testament revelations.

These elements are here represented as singing both of these songs; the sum of both consisting in an ascription of praise to the Lord God Almighty; setting forth the greatness of his works, the justice and truth of his ways, and his sovereignty as King of saints, (or, as our edition of the Greek has it, King of *nations*;) showing Him also to be the only object of fear, the only *holy* Being, (μὶνος ὅσιος,) and the Being to whom all nations are to be manifested as in subjection; and this because his judgments (δικαιώματα, justifications, or righteousnesses) are manifested; that is, are made manifest by the victory represented as just now gained over the beast. Not that God would not be *holy* and *powerful*, if the manifestation were not made, but that He is now manifested to be so.

§ 350. ‘Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty;’—or, as the Greek might be rendered, O Lord, the Almighty God. The allusion is here, in the first place, to the power of God; especially, we think, with reference to his power as a Saviour. When we speak of the works of God we are apt to associate with this term ideas only of his works of creation and providence; but it is undeniable that the work of redemption is as much the work of God as those of the creation and preservation of the world in which we dwell. Taking into view the whole tenor and subject of the Apocalypse, we think the purpose of this portion of the song or songs is, to ascribe to God the glory of all of his works, including particularly that of salvation by grace; or rather, taking into view what we believe to be the case, that this world was created to be redeemed, the works of creation and of providence are included as parts of the *great and marvellous* work of salvation. In heaven, that period is now reached when the Son gives up the kingdom unto the Father, and God is all in all; corresponding with a similar stage of doctrinal development, which according to Paul is to take place on earth, (1 Cor. xv. 28;) the elements of both the Old and New Testament revelations tending to this end,—that of showing all saving, as well as all creating and preserving power, to be in God alone.

‘Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints;’—or rather, according to most Greek editions, thou King of *nations*; which we are inclined to think correct, as it corresponds with what is afterwards said of the coming of all nations to worship, and with the prediction of the power of him who is to rule all nations as with a rod of iron, to whom all things are to be made subject, for the purpose of his transferring this subjection to the Father. Besides, the term nations is more comprehensive than the other; as nations may include saints, although saints would not include nations. God is the

Sovereign, not merely of a select portion of creation, but also of the whole universe, in every sense, natural, temporal, and spiritual.

With the term *ways* we are apt also to associate only the ways of God's providence—his dealings with men, especially in judgment. But the *way of salvation* is indisputably one of God's ways, and one not to be omitted in the enumeration of those in which the justice and the truth of God are exhibited. The justice of God is manifested in the *way* in which he has magnified the law, and made it honourable, (Is. xlii. 21 ;) while his truth is exhibited in the *way* in which all his promises and covenants of mercy have been fulfilled. This also we suppose to be the language both of the Old and New Testament revelations: "the way of truth," "the right way," or "the way of righteousness," 2 Pet. ii. 2, 15, 21, must be one of the ways of the Lord; so also "the way into the holiest," "the living way," Heb. ix. 8, and x. 20; "the way of God," Acts xviii. 26. There can be but one way of salvation, but this way may be variously illustrated; as it was predicted of John the Baptist, Luke i. 76, that he should go before the face of the Lord to prepare his *ways*. So David is represented, Acts ii. 28, as speaking of the way of salvation in the *plural*: "Thou hast made known to me the *ways* of life;" and the prophet, in reference to the same one way, Lam. i. 4, declares that the ways of Zion mourn. So it is predicted, Is. ii. 3, "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of *his ways*, and we will walk in his paths." This way, or these ways of God, (the means of salvation,) we suppose to be especially declared by these elements of revelation to be *just* and *true*.

So we suppose the term King of *nations* to apply, apocalyptically, not merely to political bodies, but to all those human elements, or pretended elements of salvation, which Paul speaks of as principalities, powers, &c., Col. ii. 15; legal elements, perhaps, having power in a certain respect, but this power being subordinate to that of sovereign grace.

§ 351. 'Who shall not fear thee, O Lord?'—Fear *thee*, that is, fear God, in contradistinction to fearing any other being, or acting from the fear of any other being; as it is said, Luke xii. 5, "Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell, (*εἰς τὴν γέενναν*;) yea, I say unto you, Fear him." The fear of the Lord, as we have before noticed, (§ 330.) being the *beginning* of wisdom, although it is designed to end in that perfect love (charity) which is to *cast out fear*; so also the intimation is given, Luke i. 74, that the end of the gospel dispensation is, that the disciple, delivered from the powers opposed to his salvation, should thenceforth serve God *without fear*. The fear above alluded to being (as the beginning of wisdom) a necessary preparation for the reception of the gospel, such a preparation may be considered the purport of the instructions of Moses

and the prophets, and of Christ and his apostles ; all setting forth those terrors of the law by which men are to be persuaded to seek the refuge provided for them, (2 Cor. v. 11.)

‘ And glorify thy name.’—The element *self*, represented by the beast, being now overcome, the principle is manifest that the motive of every action of the creature should be to promote the glory of God ; not partly to glorify the name of God, and partly to glorify the name of man, or one’s own name. The creature is now manifestly in that position in which the glory of his salvation, as well of his subsequent works, is ascribed to his divine Redeemer alone.

‘ For thou only art *holy*,’ (ἅγιος.)—The term in the original expresses a holiness of *quality*, as distinguished from ἅγιος, which we suppose to apply only to a holiness of *position*, (§ 321.) God *only* is holy in the sense of perfect moral purity and goodness ; corresponding with the declaration of Jesus, Matt. xix. 17, “ Why callest thou me *good*? There is none *good* (ἀγαθός) but one, that is, God.” This, we may say, is a fundamental principle of the gospel dispensation ; for if there were any being *good*, in this strict sense of the term, beside God, that being would be independent of God—having a right to an eternal life and happiness on the ground of his own merits. The legal and gospel dispensations, (the song of Moses and that of the Lamb,) accordingly, both coincide in establishing the position that God alone is *holy*.

‘ For all nations shall come and worship before thee.’—As before observed, we suppose these nations to represent all things ; as it is said of Christ, whom God “ exalted far above all principalities, and powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come,” (Eph. i. 21.) The sign of the future tense, *shall*, applies to the manifestation, and not to the fact. All things were created by God and for God, Col. i. 16 : “ The nations are but as a drop of a bucket, and as the small dust of the balance before him,” (Is. xl. 15 ;) and this has been the case from the beginning. The subordination and subserviency of every thing and principle to the element of divine sovereignty, yet remains, however, to be manifested. This is spoken of as a thing known and admitted in the divine counsels, although not yet developed on earth. When it is manifested that the Son, as Paul expresses it, has delivered up the kingdom unto the Father, and God is all in all, then apparently, in the apocalyptic sense of the phrase, the nations may be said to come and worship before God.\*

\* It is said, in the preceding chapter, of Babylon, that “ she made all nations (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη) drink of her wine ;” and in the thirteenth chapter, of the beast, that “ power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations ;” and Rev. xiv.



§ 352. 'For thy judgments are made manifest.'—The word *δικαιώματα*, translated judgments in this place, is rendered, Rom. ii. 26, by righteousness, although, being in the plural, it should be rendered by *righteousnesses*; the righteousnesses of the law, in this chapter of Romans, being contrasted with what is said of the righteousness of God without the law in the next chapter. The same term precisely is rendered by the word *righteousnesses*, in speaking of that which constitutes the fine linen of the saints, Rev. xix. 8. The term in the singular is rendered also by *righteousness*, Rom. v. 18, and viii. 4. Rom. v. 16, it is translated *justification*; Rom. i. 32, it is rendered by *judgment*; Luke i. 6, by *commandment*; and Heb. ix. 1 and 10, by *ordinances*. There is a similar diversity in the Latin versions of Leusden and Beza, the same Greek noun being variously rendered by *jus*, *justitia*, and *justificatio*. In the present case, therefore, we are to select such rendering as appears most in conformity with the whole passage.

The beast system was a system of self-justification, or of self-righteousness. This system having been overthrown, it is natural to suppose this song of the victors to apply to the opposite system of justification by God's righteousness: accordingly, the better rendering here apparently would be, "For thy *justifications* (thy righteousnesses) are made manifest." The plural *δικαιώματα* is used by Heliodorus, (according to Donnegan,) to express *means of defence, pleadings, justificatory documents*. Something like this, we suppose to be the idea in contemplation. The elements contending with the beast have overcome in the *legal* contest, and they owe their victory to the prevalence of the *means of defence* found in the justifying power of God's righteousness imputed to the disciple. This power is now manifest by the result of the contest: God is praised, not merely because he is just in punishing the delinquent, but because his power of justification is made apparent in the salvation of the sinner.

Here are three reasons given for fearing God and glorifying his name:—first, because he is the only Being intrinsically *holy*; second, because all things, (nations,) principles, &c., are to be manifestly subordinate to him; and thirdly, because his *means of justification* are proven to predominate over every opposing element.

9, 10, the decree is published, apparently, that all these nations shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, and be tormented for ever; and yet we find in this passage, (Rev. xv. 4,) "that all nations (*πάντα τὰ ἔθνη*) shall come and worship before God." This appears to presuppose a change in these elements, termed the *nations*; as if we were to say. No sooner is the element of self, or the principle of *self-service*, removed from the human heart, (by the victory over the beast,) than the same services or works, proceeding from a different motive, will become acts of worship towards God, and strictly elements of his service. Principles thus changed, however, may be the *nations of the new earth*, spoken of Rev. xxi. 24.

## TEMPLE SCENE.

Vs. 5, 6. And after that I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: and the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

Καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον, καὶ ἡγοίγη ὁ ναὸς τῆς σκηνῆς τοῦ μαρτυρίου ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, καὶ ἐξῆλθον οἱ ἐπὶ τὰ ἄγγελοι οἱ ἔχοντες τὰς ἐπὶ πλεγὰς ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ, ἐνδεδυμένοι λίνον καθαρόν λαμπρὸν καὶ περιεζωσμένοι περὶ τὰ στήθη ζώνας χρυσαῖς.

§ 353. ‘And after that,’ &c.—The action of the chorus has closed. The *ode* of Moses and the *ode* of the Lamb, sung by those having obtained the victory over the beast, seems intended to show us the nature of this victory as a triumph of doctrinal truth over error; at the same time indicating the subject of the narrative in the subsequent part of the narration to be something already determined upon in heaven;—the singing of these odes being equivalent to the narrations of the Old and New Testaments; as it was a custom of ancient times to hand down historical traditions from age to age by songs or odes.

There is now an additional object presented in the scenery; or, at least, the object appears now first to attract the attention of the apostle. The first verse of the chapter seems to have been an anticipation of what is said in this and the subsequent verses. The apostle began with speaking of a great sign that he saw in heaven,—seven angels having, &c. His narrative was here interrupted by the song of the chorus, and he now goes back to describe the manner in which these seven angels made their appearance, and the source whence the seven plagues was derived.

‘And lo, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.’\*—This is no doubt the temple of God described as opened, Rev. xi. 19. The consequence of the opening of this temple then was an exhibition of the woman—the covenant of redemption—and her child; and also the appearance of the adversary of both woman and child—(the dragon or accuser.)

The consequence of the opening of the temple at this time is the ap-

\* The temple may be considered as forming part of the scenery throughout; but what particularly attracts the spectator’s attention at this time is, that the temple is *opened*. It was opened on a former occasion, but it may be considered as having been shut during the reign of the beast, and the possession of its outer court by the Gentiles. It is now reopened, and the consequence of its reopening is the going forth of the elements calculated to destroy the errors prevailing in the worship of God. So Christ is the spiritual temple, and as he reveals or unveils his true character and offices, this spiritual temple is opened; while the truths, emanating from this development, become the means of destroying the errors of *self-righteousness*, *self-justification*, *self-dependence*, &c.

pearance of the seven angels with the wrath of God. The temple we suppose to be put for that arrangement of principles upon which the worshipper is enabled to come to God in an acceptable manner; the tabernacle is the shelter provided for the disciple *in Christ*, and the testimony must be the witness borne by the revealed word to these particulars. Christ is the minister of the true tabernacle: he is the tabernacle itself, affording the shelter of righteousness with which the disciple is *clothed upon*, as with a house from heaven. He is also the temple; in him alone the worshipper having “access as by one Spirit unto the Father,” (Eph. ii. 18.) To behold the temple opened, is therefore especially to perceive a development of the mystery of this *access* unto God.

‘And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues.’—As the temple represents especially the access to God provided in Christ, we may suppose the exhibition about to be made to pertain especially to the worship of God; the plagues of the angels being elements of correction, by which errors on the subject of this worship are to be removed, that the disciple may be enabled to worship (serve) his God *in spirit and in truth*. The angel calling for the *harvest* came out of the temple; the angel having the sharp sickle also came from the temple, and the angel calling for the exercise of the sharp sickle upon the vine of the earth must have come from the temple, as he is said to come out from the altar, and the altar was in a court of the temple. These seven angels are therefore, like the last three of the preceding chapters, messengers especially from the temple, and their commissions pertain especially to the temple service.

‘Clothed in pure and white linen,’ &c.—Fine linen is declared to be the righteousness of the saints, and we suppose this pure and white linen to be of the same texture. These messengers from the temple appear arrayed in the imputed righteousness of Jesus—they wear his livery—they are the ministers of this righteousness, holding it forth as the only means of justification in the sight of God. This raiment of divine purity is also girt about them by the girdle of *truth*,—the exhibition of the righteousness of Christ, as the only garment of salvation, depending for its support upon the *truth* of revelation. The difference between a girdle about the breasts, and a girdle about the loins, we have already noticed, (§ 29.)

Vs. 7. 8. And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

Καὶ ἓν ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων ζώων ἔδωκε τοῖς ἐπὶ ἀγγέλοις ἑπτὰ χρυσῆς χηναίς, γεμούσας τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Καὶ ἐγερμίσθη ὁ ναὸς καὶ τὸ ἐκ τῆς δόξης τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ· καὶ οὐδεὶς ἰδύνατο εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὸν ναόν, ἄχρι τελεσθῶσιν αἱ ἑπτὰ πληγαὶ τῶν ἐπὶ ἀγγέλων.



§ 354. ‘And one of the four living creatures,’ &c.—The apostle now goes back to relate how the seven plagues were obtained by the angels.—They were first described to be seen having the plagues; next, seen *coming out of the temple* having the plagues; and lastly, seen coming out of the temple *after having received from one of the four beasts* the vials containing the plagues. The order of development is thus an inversion of the natural order of narrative; for in the natural order the apostle would have commenced by stating in the first place that he saw the plagues given to the angels prior to their coming out, or at the time of their coming out of the temple. This *inversed* order, however, may be termed the natural order of *revelation*, because in the revelation of a mystery the most minute particulars are the last to be given.

The numeral *one*, (ἓν,) as we have before had occasion to remark, (§ 145,) is sometimes employed in the Greek for an ordinal.\* So applying it here, the rendering would be, “And the *first* of the four living creatures gave,” &c. This we think the correct reading, as the action corresponds with the lion-like attribute of the *first* living creature, (Rev. iv. 7,)—the attribute, as we have supposed, of divine justice; the seven exhibitions of wrath now about to be made being the last illustrations of the action of divine justice upon the elements of the system of self-righteousness: for we suppose the action of the last or seventh vial to cover the subsequent revelation as far as the close of the twentieth chapter, if not as far as the eighth verse of the twenty-first chapter inclusive.

‘Seven golden vials,’ &c.—The word properly signifies a vessel with a broad bottom, or bowl, (Donnegan)—a drinking cup. These seven *cups* probably constituting seven illustrations of the cup (goblet) of indignation, spoken of Rev. xiv. 9, 10, to be participated in by the worshippers of the beast.

These cups or bowls are golden, being developments of *truth*—their composition, their material, is truth;—the pouring out of these golden vessels representing the action of certain portions of revealed truth upon certain erroneous principles, elements of a system of error; the wrath, fury, or vehemence (θυμός) in contemplation, being a fury against principles opposed in effect to the salvation of man, and not against men themselves. Such at least we suppose to be the apocalyptic meaning of this *wrath*.

§ 355. ‘And the temple was filled with smoke,’ &c.—Smoke is of course an indication of fire. Fire we take to be uniformly the figure of the revealed word of God, as the instrument of testing and trying the character of all doctrines and principles—truth, like pure gold, being alone

\* As Gen. i. 5, καὶ ἐγένετο ἑσπέρα καὶ ἐγένετο πρωὶ ἡμέρα μία, (Sept.,) And the morning and the evening became the *first* day.

capable of abiding such a test. The idea to be associated with this smoke seems to be that of the operation of something like a great process by fire, the result of which is to be the detection and destruction of error, and the development of truth.

‘From [out of, *ἐκ*] the glory of God, and from [out of] his power,’ or strength.—The glory and power of God are the two elements by which the instrument of trial is put into operation: two final causes, from which the revealed word draws, as by inference, the truth of salvation by *grace*; these two final causes evolving this truth, through the instrumentality of the revealed word;—showing that, without a salvation of this kind, God cannot be glorified, nor his redeeming power manifested;—the glory of God requiring the salvation of the sinner to be a matter of sovereign grace, as distinguished from a matter of human works or merits; and the manifestation of God’s strength, as a Saviour, requiring an exhibition of the same truth.

‘And no man [no one] was able to enter the temple,’ &c.—The development of these two elements may be said to be in operation in that arrangement of principles which enables the worshipper to come to God, giving him access in Christ to the throne of grace. At the same time we may consider the deductions from these two elements as constituting the ingredients of the cup of wrath; that is, constituting the means by which the erroneous principles, the objects of this wrath, are to be destroyed. This operation is gradual; the eradication of errors and the development of truths, are gradually effected. During the process, the disciple sees through a glass darkly; he is unable to discern his true position in the temple. The smoke of Sinai occupies the attention of those who are yet under the influence of the beast and false prophet, and on account of this smoke they are unable to discern the light of the blessed gospel of peace. The combustion in the temple, which causes the smoke, is the necessary process for filling the vials or golden vessels; and it is not till this work is accomplished that the temple position can be discerned.

The whole figure is apparently taken from the operations of alchemists in ancient times, whose great object was to search for gold, and if possible, as they supposed it to be possible, by a transmutation of metals, to make it. The Greek term *πῶς*, (smoke,) is said (Jones’s *Lex.*) to be compounded of the words *ναίω πρὸς*, signifying the *breath of fire*, reminding us of what is said of the destruction of the man of sin, 2 Thes. ii. 8, “whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth;” indicating a parity of action between these seven vials and of that power of truth described by Paul; the destruction of the man of sin, and the victory over the beast being, as we apprehend, equivalent figures.

This chapter is introductory to the narrative of the subsequent chapter. Exclusive of the action of the *chorus*, which looks even beyond the next chapter, the purport of what we have gone over is to inform us whence the seven angels came, viz., from the temple ; how they obtain their seven vials from the first living creature ; with what these seven vials are filled—the wrath of God ; and from what elements the contents of these vials have originated, or from what elements this wrath is a necessary result—viz., from the glory of God and from his power.

With this prefatory information we shall be enabled to appreciate, and in some degree to understand, the narrative about to be given us of the pouring out of these seven vials. It is to be regretted that there is any division of the chapters here, for there is no pause supposed, or to be supposed, between the conclusion of this and the commencement of the next chapter.



## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE POURING OUT OF THE SEVEN VIALS OF WRATH.

V. 1. And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

*Καὶ ἤκουσα μεγάλης φωνῆς ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ λεγούσης τοῖς ἐπὶ τὰ ἄγγελοις· ὑπάγετε καὶ ἐκχέετε τὰς ἐπὶ τὰς φιάλας τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ εἰς τὴν γῆν.*

§ 356. ‘AND I heard a great voice,’ &c.—The seven angels, having the seven vials of wrath, were seen coming out of the temple; the wrath itself appears to have been prepared in the temple, and now the command to pour out this wrath comes as by a great voice from the temple. The temple cannot be entered, as we are informed at the close of the last chapter, till these seven plagues are fulfilled, or till the pouring out of these vials is accomplished. This command we may presume therefore to be given for the ultimate purpose that the temple may be entered; that every obstacle (error) being removed, the access to God, by faith in Christ, may be fully laid open.

There is virtually a loud call from the temple arrangement for this effusion of wrath, in order that the worshipper may be enabled to avail himself of the privileges of the temple. The object of wrath, of course, is not the worshipper, but it is that accumulation of errors in matters of faith which renders the purification of the temple service indispensable.

‘Saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out,’ &c.—It could hardly be supposed that the temple of God called in a literal sense for the destruction of the earth, but we may easily conceive of the case in which a system of divine worship, represented by the temple, calls for the destruction of an erroneous opposite system, inconsistent with such worship; and this we suppose to be what is represented in the vision.

## FIRST VIAL.

V. 2. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth [land]; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and (upon) them which worshipped his image.

*Καὶ ἀπῆλθεν ὁ πρῶτος, καὶ ἐξέχεε τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν γῆν· καὶ ἐγένετο ἔλκος κακὸν καὶ πονηρὸν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους τοὺς ἔχοντας τὸ χάραγμα τοῦ θηρίου καὶ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας τῇ εἰκόνι αὐτοῦ.*

‘And the first poured out,’ &c.—The term *earth* (ἡ γῆ) is used in two senses, in judging of which we must be regulated by the context. *Go pour your vials upon the earth*, is equivalent to an instruction to pour upon the whole sphere of earth, land and water; while the action of the first angel, in pouring out his vial upon the earth, is evidently restricted to pouring it upon the *land*, in contradistinction to the sea, or other watery elements, upon which the two next vials are effused.

This first vial is poured upon the *land*, the element whence the two-horned beast was seen to rise, (Rev. xiii. 11;) the system, as we have supposed of self-dependence, originating a certain misinterpretation of revealed truth—a system which, in a spiritual sense, yields only thorns and thistles, as the result of man’s works; or will be proved so to do when the truth is manifested.

‘And there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men,’ &c.—These men are *inhabiters* of the earth—those subject to the woes denounced Rev. viii. 13; the pouring out of these vials being a part of the *third wo*. From what was said of the power of the beast and of the false prophet in the thirteenth chapter, all the *inhabiters* of the earth, except the one hundred and forty-four thousand, may be supposed to have received the mark of the beast, and to have worshipped his image; and, consequently, to have become infected with this pestilential *ulcer*. Ulcers or sores in the natural body are indications of the bad state of the system; what is commonly called a bad habit, (καχεξία, cachexy.) This bad habit may exist before the ulcer makes its appearance: some exciting cause brings out the sore, and thus serves as a test, showing the real condition of the patient; the eruption on the surface of the body being an effect of the inward disease. Sores too having their varieties, the character of the irruption corresponds with that of the disease. The test accordingly, whatever it may be, becomes the means of indicating the latent ailment.

§ 357. The pouring out of these vials may be viewed as the application of so many tests. The effusion of this first vial upon the earth or land is not the cause of the ulcer, for the cause is in the bad habit—the constitution of the men; but it is the means of betraying and manifesting their real condition—showing their real character; the condition of man *by nature* (his earthly position) corresponding with the description of the prophet, Is. i. 5, 6: “The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.” So David, under a conviction of his “iniquities,” exclaims, “My wounds stink and are corrupt, because of my foolishness,” Ps. xxxviii. 5.

Our English term *there fell* seems to imply that the sore came from above, or from some external source. The expression in the original, however, is *there was*, or there was *generated*;—the same Greek term, *ἐγένετο*, being rendered in the next two verses by the word *became*,—that is, so soon as the vial was poured upon the earth, the sore made its appearance. As soon as the self-righteous disciple is so far brought to the knowledge of the truth as to be convinced of sin, and of the sinfulness of sin, and of the *foolishness* of his own pretensions, he perceives himself to be but a *leper* in the sight of his God. He is no more *unchanged* now than he was before, but the sore of his leprosy now shows itself. Analogous with this we suppose to be the operation of the pouring out of the first vial upon the earth—an exhibition of the wrath of God against every element inconsistent with his glory, and with the manifestation of his saving power, being brought home as a test to the earthly and self-righteous system, exhibits the elements of that system in the light of lepers, covered with their ulcerous and putrefying sores.

The angel pouring forth the vial comes from the *temple*. It is from that view of the economy of redemption in which Christ is contemplated as the temple, that the proof is produced, showing the impurity of a system, the principles of which are, in effect, so many motives of selfishness, wholly inconsistent with the true worship of God—a selfishness like the leprosy of old, spreading itself over the whole surface, contaminating every action, work or doctrine with which it comes in contact: a little leaven of this selfishness leavening the whole lump—characterizing the whole conduct of the individual. The mark of the beast itself, we may say, becomes in the nature of the case, when its true tendency is exhibited, a noisome and grievous sore.

A period is spoken of, 2 Tim. iii. 1, as the *last days*, “when men shall be lovers of their own selves,” (*φιλάτοι*.) Literally speaking we do not know a period when men have not been lovers of their own selves; nor do we know a time when men have not professed to love themselves, or have not been known to love themselves, in the ordinary sense of the expression. The peculiarity in the apostle’s contemplation appears to be this: that a time is coming when men shall be manifested, in matters of religion, (doctrines,) to be lovers of their own selves, as distinguished from being lovers of God.—Their motives of conduct, (not merely the motives of those who are *without*, but also of those that are *within*.) will be manifested to be selfish. Disciples will be manifested to be influenced by the desire of *serving themselves*, rather than of serving God—professing, perhaps, to be actuated by love to God, as they profess indeed to keep the first and great commandment; but in reality having no motive of conduct other than that of regard to their own interests, and a desire to promote their own glory. The fact has been always the same, but the exhibition of this fact may be reserved for the period denominated the last days,—“the perilous times;” more properly



perhaps *difficult, trying times, καιροὶ χαλεποί*, when the true character of actions and motives will be tested.\*

The self-righteous disciple, depending upon the merit of his works, upon his zeal in the performance of his duties, leans especially upon what he terms his worship of God—his acts, particularly, of religious service; but it is as one, who “leans against a wall and a serpent bit him,” (Amos v. 19.) The trying time comes—the test is administered—the first and great commandment is brought to bear upon the *motive* of his conduct. He is actuated wholly by the love of *self*; he has not the love of God in him; the mercenary nature of his service is exhibited—the unclean ulcer appears; and like the servant of the prophet, he goes out, even in his own estimation, “a leper white as snow.” The temple service requires a worship dictated by the pure motive of the love of God, and zeal for His glory alone. As it is with the individual, so we suppose it to be with the principle of doctrine: the one serving as an illustration of the other.

#### SECOND VIAL.

V. 3. And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead (man;) and every living soul died in the sea.

Καὶ ὁ δεύτερος ἄγγελος ἐξέχεε τὴν γιᾶν αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν· καὶ ἐγένετο αἷμα ὡς νεκροῦ, καὶ πᾶσα ψυχὴ ζωῆς ἀπέθανεν ἐν τῇ θυλάσσῃ.

§ 358. ‘And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea.’—The earth, as a whole, is something upon which all of the seven vials are to be poured out. But in this sense the earth has its parts, each of which is subject to the action of a separate vial.—One of these parts (the land) we have just noticed. The sea is another part. So in the earthly system, as a whole, there are certain parts—the land represents not only the *basis* of works, the supposed means of eternal life, but also a supposed position of safety—an element the opposite of the sea: the sea being a figure of that legal view of the action of divine justice peculiar to the earthly system. It is admitted to be a fearful element, but its action is supposed to be restrained within certain limits—as if the wrath of divine justice could not overcome the boundary of man’s fancied security upon the position of his own works; or as if the merit of man’s works opposed a sufficient obstacle to the incursion of retributive justice.

The earthly system has its legal element of wrath, but of such a character as that human means are supposed to be sufficient to cope with it. It offers a view of the retributive action of divine justice, no more to be compared to the reality than an inland lake is to the universal deluge. The

\* *Χαλεπὸς*; *Difficilis, qui magno cum labore fit.*—(Suiceri Lex.)

element appears to be comparatively harmless, and even itself the means of eternal life ; as when the deluded disciple goes about to meet the requisites of divine justice by means of his own providing. “There go the ships,” Ps. civ. 20.—Through the instrumentality of human works, it is supposed to become, like the sea, the instrument of enriching those depending upon its resources.

The test, however, of the second vial is applied to it.—The real character of judicial wrath is exhibited—every soul of man that doeth evil is seen to be subject to its action. Obedience to the whole law is required ; the neglect of one commandment is a breach of the whole : the want of a love of God, is a breach of the first and great commandment. Self-examination opens the eyes to the character of this exhibition, and the sea now becomes a sea of blood : or, according to the Greek, *blood is generated*. Without shedding of blood, or loss of life, there is no remission of sin : the transgressions of the sinner legally call for the loss of his eternal life.

‘And it became as the blood of a dead body,’ (carcase.)—The blood of a living animal is the element of life ; but that there may be no misapprehension in this respect, this blood of the sea is represented as that of a dead body—blood in which putrefaction is just about commencing.

‘And every living soul died in the sea ;’ or rather, ‘all soul of life.’—The deadly, putrefying quality of this sea of blood, is communicated to every thing in it, or dependent upon it. So a just development of divine truth applied to the element of judicial wrath, in the earthly system, shows it to be not only incapable of giving eternal life, but to be actually such, in its own nature, as to destroy all tendency to life in every principle connected with it.

We have thus, in the exhibition of the effusion of these two vials, on the one hand an illustration of the noisome, unclean and offensive character of all pretensions of man to a righteousness of his own ; and on the other hand an illustration of the unremitting character of judicial wrath. The disciple, in the first picture, sees the folly of his dependence upon his own merits ; and in the other he sees, even upon his own legal principles, the necessity of looking for some means of escape from impending danger. In this extremity he falls, as we shall perceive, into another error, the subject of correction by the test next administered.

## THIRD VIAL.

Vs. 4-7. And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters : and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast

Καὶ ὁ τρίτος ἐξέχεε τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ εἰς τοὺς ποταμούς καὶ εἰς τὰς πηγὰς τῶν ὑδάτων· καὶ ἐγένετο αἷμα. Καὶ ἤκουσα τοῦ ἀγγέλου τῶν ὑδάτων λέγοντος· δίκαιος εἶ, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν ὅσιος, ὅτι ταῦτα ἐποίησας.

judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous (are) thy judgments.

ὅτι αἷμα ἁγίων καὶ προφητῶν ἐξέχουσιν, καὶ αἷμα αὐτοῖς ἔδωκας πίνειν· ἃς οἱ ἴσιν· καὶ ἤκουσα τοῦ θυναστηρίου λέγοντος· καὶ κύριε ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ, ἀληθινὰ καὶ δίκαια αἱ κρίσεις σου.

§ 359. 'And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers,' &c.—The disciple, convinced of his defilement in the sight of God, as illustrated by the ulcerous sore produced by the first vial, and having his eyes opened to the impending danger, figured by the sea of blood, seeks some means of cleansing himself from the guilt of sin, by atoning sacrifices of his own providing. With the more ignorant part of mankind, these means of ablution are supposed to consist in corporeal sufferings and privations. With the more intellectual portion they consist in mental sufferings, or mental acts of humiliation and penitence. In all they constitute what we suppose to be represented by the rivers and fountains of the earth, as in contradistinction to the one means of atonement: the pure river of the water of life, Rev. xxii. 1, and the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, Zech. xiii. 1.

We have had something like this under contemplation before, Rev. viii. 11, when the third part of the rivers and fountains became wormwood, (§ 200.) The present picture appears to be a further development of the same truth: showing that any atonement of man's providing, equal to his guilt in the sight of God, must involve the loss of eternal life—not only being incapable of giving life, (as bitter water, or sea water, is unfit for the purposes of natural life,) but still more, absolutely demanding the eternal death of the sinner. The pouring out of the third vial appears to be figurative of the exhibition of the nature of divine wrath. As a test trying the validity of these human means of purification—this third element of the earthly system—and showing the entire inconsistency of such pretended provisions of *self-redemption* with the salvation of the sinner.

'And they became blood.'—A principle of doctrine exacting from the sinner himself an expiatory suffering equal to his guilt, must be in effect a principle denouncing vengeance, instead of proclaiming pardon; no one being able, by supererogatory performances to atone for actual omissions of duty. As it is not possible to atone for a past transgression by the subsequent performance of that which it is only one's duty to perform, and which would be a duty to perform if there had been no previous transgression. Nor can we suppose it possible to expiate a neglect of duty by the performance of something which is not a duty. Even if this were possible, the penalty of sin being equal to its guilt, and this guilt being *infinite*, the proposed atonement must result in the loss of eternal life. Whether the blood of these rivers be, like that of the sea, the blood as of a dead body or otherwise, the element is equally inconsistent with the salvation of the soul.



§ 360. ‘And I heard the angel of the waters say,’ &c.—The ministering spirit of the element of propitiation, is here represented as speaking; a figure equivalent to the expression, that such is the nature of the case. The nature of perfect justice is exemplified in the peculiarities just now set forth; any earthly means of atonement, as soon as the truth is exhibited, being manifestly means of vengeance.

‘For they have shed,’ &c., or, they have *poured out*.—The verb translated *shed* is the same as that rendered *poured out* when applied to the action of the vials, indicating an exactness in the correspondence of retribution. They have *poured out* the blood of the saints and prophets, therefore thou hast justly *poured out* blood to them to drink. As it might be said of one who, rejecting the blood of the covenant, preferred trusting to an atonement of his own working out. Upon his own principles it is but just for him to suffer the loss of eternal life, since, as a matter of faith, he receives thereby the fruit of his own doings. Apocalyptically, however, we suppose elements of doctrine to be referred to here, as elsewhere. The inhabitants of the earth are those making use of the fountains and rivers of the earth: these are said to have poured out the blood of the saints and prophets;—and, comparing this passage with Rev. vi. 9–11, we find the time now to have come for executing the vengeance there alluded to, upon those that dwell on the earth. We accordingly suppose these prophets and saints, like the souls under the altar, to represent elements of truth, (§§ 161, 162;) elements of the testimony furnished both by the Old and New Testaments, of which the spiritual sense is now to be vindicated; these elements being figuratively spoken of as human beings, (martyrs;) as other elements are spoken of as rivers, fountains, blood, &c. In a literal sense, it was only the inhabitants of Palestine and its vicinity that had ever been favoured with the presence of the prophets; and even the martyrs of Jesus, in the apostle’s time, had suffered persecution only in a small part, comparatively, of the Roman empire. Blood representing life, and life being put for spirit, the earthly elements are said to have shed blood, &c., because the earthly system is sustained by depriving the elements of Scripture testimony of their proper spiritual sense. The earthly system of doctrine is built upon the *letter* of revelation; this privation, therefore, falls back eventually upon the elements of the earth, showing their inconsistency with God’s plan of salvation, and their incompatibility with his way of eternal life. The *letter* killeth—the earthly system adopts the *letter*—abides the results of the literal interpretation: and thus, when the truth is manifested, shows itself to be a ministration of death unto death; a ministration of condemnation, as the opposite of that of justification, (2 Cor. iii. 9.)

‘And I heard another out of,’ &c., (*ἄλλον ἐκ τῶν*.)—These words are not in all editions of the Greek. The passage might be rendered, And I

heard *from the altar*, saying—virtually, a message from the altar. As the principle of atonement, (the angel of the waters,) called for the destruction of the errors in the earthly system pertaining to that portion of the mystery of salvation ; so the principle of sacrifice, (the voice from the altar,) calls for the same destruction of error, or pronounces it to be just and right. Christ is represented by the altar, as well as by the temple, by the sacrifice, and by the priest or *sacrificator*. In Christ, any offering of the disciple is sanctified, set apart, and made holy and acceptable to God ; and it may be said that Christ himself requires the destruction of errors opposed to the true principle upon which alone sacrifices are to be offered to the Most High.

We suppose this voice or message from the altar also to be put for something in the nature of the case. Every sacrifice, it is said, must be salted with salt, (Lev. ii. 13 ; Mark ix. 49 ;) that is, every sacrifice, to be acceptable to God, must possess a preservative principle. He that offers his own merits to God, offers a corrupt thing. The merits of man have no preserving principle in them. He who offers to God the merits of Christ, or who pleads the merits of Christ as an offering in his behalf, offers an incorruptible sacrifice. Such we suppose to be the requisition of the altar service. This service calls for the destruction of all errors of doctrine incompatible with this principle of sacrifice ; consequently, it virtually lauds that divine justice which, by a due exhibition of its wrath, destroys all pretensions of man to an atonement of his own making. We admit our analysis of this passage to be very imperfect, but we think the general purport of these exclamations corresponds with the ideas here suggested.

#### FOURTH VIAL.

Vs. 8, 9. And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun ; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues : and they repented not to give him glory.

Καὶ ὁ τέταρτος ἐξέχεε τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν ἥλιον· καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ καυματοῦσαι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐν πυρὶ. Καὶ ἐκαυμάτισθησαν οἱ ἄνθρωποι κατὰ μέγα, καὶ ἐβλάφησαν τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἔχοντος ἐξουσίαν ἐπὶ τὰς πληγὰς ταύτας, καὶ οὐ μετενόησαν δοῦναι αὐτῷ δόξαν.

§ 361. ‘ And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun ;’—or, concerning or about the sun. The general direction was to pour the seven vials *upon* the earth, as our translators have it ; but the Greek preposition employed on this occasion and in relating the pouring out of the three first vials is *εἰς*, with an accusative, signifying *unto* rather than *upon* ; corresponding with our idea of applying a chemical test to the object to be tried. On the other hand, in relating the pouring out of the four last vials, the Greek preposition is *ἐπὶ*, which primarily signifies *upon* ; but which, as we have seen, (§ 231,) is frequently used to express *about*, *concerning*. We are

inclined to think the term *upon* carries with it too literal an association of ideas in the first case, and in the last it does not comport with the sense of the text. The fourth vial was poured out *about* the sun; that is, figuratively, upon the medium of vision through which the sun is perceived: the sun itself may be supposed to be unchanged or unaffected, but its action after the pouring out of the vial is very different, or appears very differently from what it was before; the development is therefore something *about*, or *concerning*, the sun.

We do not suppose the erroneous system spoken of as the *earth* to be a heathen, a pagan, or infidel system; we take it to be something in the visible church of Christ—professedly a Christian system—and as such, possessing features corresponding apparently or nominally with certain prominent features of the gospel plan of salvation. The earthly system, indeed, is formed from a certain construction of scriptural revelation; it is not a scheme of what is commonly called *natural religion*; we must expect therefore to find in it characteristics resembling those of revelation. It has its supposed position of safety, the land; it has its element of apprehension, the sea; it has its means or supposed means of atonement, its rivers and fountains; and it has also, as we now find, its sun of righteousness, or rather its mistaken view of the Sun of righteousness.

‘And power was given to him to scorch,’ &c.—We have supposed, at the pouring of the last, or third vial, the inhabitants of the earth to have been trusting to their means of atonement, such as the earth afforded; these means proving to be those of blood, we contemplate these inhabitants as still trusting to some other earthly resources, one of which we may imagine to be their *sun of righteousness*; or what they suppose to be the action of such a sun. The development of truth, or a just exposition of the wrath of God, is now brought to bear upon the erroneous views heretofore prevailing upon this subject. Men have supposed this action to consist in its communicating to them an intrinsic goodness or righteousness; making them literally as righteous, or morally perfect, as the source whence that righteousness or perfection is imparted. In forming this erroneous conception, they have deluded themselves by their estimate of the sun, in the same manner as they have done in their estimate of the sea. In order to cope with the element of divine justice, they have brought down their views of that justice to their own standard of imperfect obedience; so, in order to countenance their misapprehended intrinsic participation in the perfection of the Sun of righteousness, they have brought down that perfection in an equal degree to the standard of their own imperfect moral attainments. The test being administered, the truth is exhibited, that this righteousness of the spiritual Sun is a perfect righteousness, that there is nothing in human attainments at all corresponding with it. The murky exhalations from the earth are cleared



away; the infinite difference between the righteousness required and the imperfect righteousness of man is exhibited. Human pretensions to perfection, like *plants without root*, are scorched and withered away.

The Sun of righteousness, (the Lord our righteousness,) rises with healing in his wings, to the humble disciple looking to the protection of that imputed righteousness, which, like the wings of the parent bird, are as a shield and buckler to those trusting under their shadow. But to those trusting in a righteousness of their own, although they may esteem or term it an *imparted* righteousness, the manifestation of the character of this Sun must be as the coming of the day which shall *burn as an oven*, when all these pretensions of human pride and self-dependence shall be as stubble; for the day that cometh shall burn them up, leaving them neither root nor branch, (Mal. iv. 1.) Corresponding with this imagery, both of the prophet and of the apostle, we suppose the administration of the fourth test to be the means of dissipating this fourth error pervading the earthly system. As the preceding delusion was one concerning the doctrine of the atonement, so the present may be said to be one concerning the doctrine of justification.

§ 362. ‘And men were scorched,’ &c.—We are to bear in mind that this term *men* is to be considered throughout the Apocalypse as a figurative appellation of doctrinal principles, dependent upon the earthly system.—These principles are described as exposed to a trial corresponding with that of the fire spoken of by Paul, 1 Cor. iii. 13, which is to try every man’s work. The subject of the Apocalypse is a development of truths to be made manifest in this life—something distinct from the particulars of a future state of rewards and punishments, which are to be made known only in another state of existence. We cannot suppose it to be the intention of this book to show that these rewards and punishments are to be administered in this life; which would be the case if we were to understand the action of these vials in a literal sense, and the *men* spoken of as literally human beings.

‘And blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues.’—Blasphemy against God we have already noticed as a pretension tending to place one’s self upon an equality with God, (§ 303.) This trial by heat, or this action of the sun, causes the blasphemous character of the pretensions in contemplation to appear—the blasphemy being a consequence of the scorching. The tendency of any doctrinal principle to rob God’s name of the glory due in the work of salvation, may be considered blasphemous. To maintain the doctrine that the disciple, by a certain *infusion* of righteousness, or perfection, becomes righteous or perfect as God is righteous or perfect, is something of this blasphemous tendency. A just exhibition of the action of the Sun of righteousness in justifying the sinner by imputed righteousness (not by imparted or infused righteousness,) while it scorches or dries up the false pretensions adverted to, tends to show also their real character.

The *name* of God, we suppose to have particular reference to his great, his mystic name—Jehovah! our righteousness, or the Lord our righteousness. The blasphemy of this name must consist in something opposed to its exaltation above every other name that is named—something, in fine, showing the righteousness of the creature to be equal with that of the Creator, and consequently denying this name of God (the Lord our righteousness) to be of the glorious and sovereign character represented in the Scriptures. Here we may say the manifestation of the Sun of righteousness, in his unclouded majesty, has the power of exhibiting the folly and wickedness of the earthly pretensions designated as *the men*.

\* Which bath power over these plagues ;’—according to the Greek the men spoken of blasphemed the name of *the God having power over these plagues*. The plagues are tests calculated to detect the falsehood and wickedness of the pretensions to which they are applied ;—God has power to withhold these tests, and to delay their application ; but, what is more, he has power, in the exercise of his grace as a sovereign, to forgive and to purge away even the iniquity of these false pretensions. These *men*, in the hardness of their hearts, instead of humbling themselves before him who has this power over the instrument, appear to be excited only to blasphemy by the tortures they undergo ;—as if the sinner, when convinced of his transgressions, and awakened to a view of the coming wrath, should blaspheme the God he had offended, instead of seeking to obtain his mercy and forgiveness.

‘ And repented not to give him glory.’—The word translated *repented*, μεταμένηται, is applicable to a change of mind, or a change of views, and, especially in Scripture, to that mental change which constitutes a conviction of sin, of unworthiness, and of the need of mercy. This figure, with the preceding, appropriately exhibits the unchangeableness of the false principles in contemplation ; especially in respect to the *glory* to be ascribed to God as the God of salvation. It is not in the nature, we may say, of the elements of self-righteousness, to change in this respect ; their tendency is to ascribe that glory to the redeemed which belongs solely to the Redeemer.\*

\* The action of this fourth vial corresponds with that of the fourth trumpet, the development being the same in kind, but differing in degree. Darkness was then the result; the plague was *destractive*; the rays of the sun were not then perceived: here on the contrary they are perceived, and act in a destructive manner upon the objects against which they are directed. So at the opening of the sixth seal, the sun became *black* as sackcloth of hair; its light was not exhibited—its plague was negative only. To the convinced sinner, ignorant of the gospel plan, the Sun of righteousness affords no ray of light; but to the self-righteous, who rejects the offer of salvation by imputed righteousness, who goes about to establish a righteousness of his own, the same Sun may be said to be manifested as a fire that is to try his every work.

## FIFTH VIAL.

Vs. 10, 11. And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

Καὶ ὁ πέμπτος ἐξέχεε τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν θρόνον τοῦ θηρίου· καὶ ἐγένετο ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ ἐσκοτωμένη, καὶ ἐμισσῶντο τὰς γλώσσας αὐτῶν ἐκ τοῦ πόνου, καὶ ἐβλασφήμησαν τὸν θεὸν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐκ τῶν πόνων αὐτῶν καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἐλκῶν αὐτῶν, καὶ οὐ μετενόησαν ἐκ τῶν ἔργων αὐτῶν.

§ 363. ‘And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat (throne) of the beast.’—Our common version renders the word *θρόνον* here, by a word which does not give a full idea of the meaning. The beast, as appears from the account before given of him, assumes all the attributes of sovereignty;—with these he has a throne, and this throne is that given him by the dragon, or accuser, (Rev. xiii. 2.) The throne is that which exhibits the individual occupying it as a sovereign. As such, we suppose the throne of the beast to be that principle which places *self* in the light of a sovereign. The test, the vial of wrath, being brought to act upon this principle, shows the kingdom peculiar to such a principle of sovereign power to be a kingdom of darkness.

The beast derives his pretensions to sovereignty from the accuser, and the accuser’s power depends upon the false assumption, that the law still remains to be fulfilled by the disciple, (§ 297.) This false assumption, therefore, we may consider the principle of sovereignty in question—the throne of the beast—for if man be not amenable to the law the power of the accuser ceases, and the beast no longer enjoys the possession of a throne;—so the claims of the self-righteous errorist to the glory of his own salvation, can be sustained only upon this supposition of the continuance of the legal economy.

God’s throne is a throne of grace, Heb. iv. 16; and grace is the opposite of works—so the throne of the beast, as the opposite of that of God, may be denominated a throne of *works*. The principle upon which God exhibits his sovereignty, is that of giving freely—giving where there is no claim of merit. The principle of the beast’s claim to sovereignty, on the contrary, is that of enjoying even eternal life as a right—a reward of merit—a matter of wages. Against this principle a true and just exhibition of the wrath of God is brought to bear;—love to God, as the motive of every action, is shown to be an indispensable requisite of the law; and the absence of this motive is proved to be an overt transgression of the law. The subject of the law is thus demonstrated in all things to have come short of his duty. The existence of the element of righteousness, or merit, is proved to be wholly incompatible with the reign of the beast, (self,) and consequently



his kingdom is full of *darkness*—for, as we have supposed (§ 192) *light* in a spiritual sense to be put in this revelation for righteousness, so we suppose darkness in the same spiritual sense to be put for the absence of righteousness; our views of natural, intellectual and spiritual darkness corresponding with those we have already expressed of a similar classification of the term *light*.

As the throne of God is a throne of *grace*, so the kingdom of God is a kingdom of light, or of righteousness; because his imputed moral perfection is the pervading element of the position of grace, constituting this kingdom: a position of *marvellous light*, indeed, as it is well called by an apostle.—So, as the throne of the beast is a throne of works, (works of darkness, Rom. xiii. 12,) his kingdom must be one in which an entire absence of this element is manifested as soon as the truth is duly exhibited; for, as it is said, “By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified;” “If righteousness come by the law, Christ is dead in vain,” Gal. ii. 16–21. Until this exhibition of truth be made, the kingdom of the beast may be supposed to have appeared as a position of light—its inhabitants walked “in the light of the sparks of their own kindling.” The vial of divine wrath being now poured out, the light that is in them proves to be darkness; their fancied righteousness proves to be iniquity; and having no other resource, it may be said of them, “Darkness covers their land, and gross darkness the people.”—a condition to which allusion appears to be made in the admonition of the prophet, Jer. xiii. 15, 16: “Hear ye and give ear, be not proud, for the Lord hath spoken. Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains; and while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.”

‘And they gnawed their tongues for pain,’ (*præ labore*, Leusden.)—The elements of the system of the beast are here personified as subjects of the kingdom—inhabiters of the earth; they bite their tongues in the anguish of labour, or according to Beza, *præ dolore*; an equally strong figure of vexation and disappointment; as the persecutors of Stephen were cut to the heart, and gnashed upon him with their teeth when they could not gainsay his statements.

‘And blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and sores;’ or, more strictly, *out of their labours and out of their ulcerous sores*. These vain protensions of works and of self-righteousness being themselves acts of blasphemy, or the immediate causes of that blasphemy, their true character is exhibited by the application of the test, (the effusion of the vial.)

‘And repented not of their deeds.’—As we remarked of the men scorched with fire, these elements of the beast’s kingdom, like the elements of the earthly system, are unchangeable in the nature of the case; the only

remedy to be administered is the destruction of the whole kingdom, by destroying its ruling principles.

Thus far, however, the kingdom of the beast is not supposed to be overthrown:—the blasphemous, mercenary, and vainglorious system of self still continues to be wondered after by the inhabitants of the world. It is proved to be a kingdom of darkness, devoid of the element of righteousness; but its final destruction is yet to be revealed.

#### SIXTH VIAL.

V. 12. And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

Καὶ ὁ ἕκτος ἐξέχεε τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν ποταμὸν τὸν μέγαν, τὸν Εὐφράτην· καὶ ἐξηράθη τὸ ὕδωρ αὐτοῦ, ἵνα ἐτοιμασθῇ ἡ ὁδὸς τῶν βασιλείων τῶν ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν ἡλίου.

§ 364. ‘And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates.’—The judgment of this vial is preparative—the last *blow* upon the kingdom of the beast left it in a state of darkness, (a system of salvation without the justifying element of righteousness.) Preparation is now made for its entire overthrow, to be effected apparently by the conquest of its *capital*. The figure seems to be borrowed from the manner in which the kingdom of Chaldea was conquered by the Medes and Persians. Babylon was the capital of this kingdom, and the capture of Babylon was equivalent to the overthrow of the Chaldean dynasty. Media and Persia lay to the east of Babylon, and the establishment of the Persian monarchy in this capital may be regarded as a preparatory step towards the restoration of the captives of Judah to the land of their fathers—the order for rebuilding of the city and temple going forth at the commencement of the reign of Cyrus, (Ezra i. 1–5, Dan. ix. 25.) This event also happened about the year of the world 3500, at which period the typical history of the Old Testament ceases and the voice of prophecy is silenced—the end of types and shadows having then come.

Corresponding with these historical facts, the termination of the apocalyptic dynasty of the beast is about to be effected by the destruction of the apocalyptic Babylon; a destruction for which the preparatory step is now taken by the drying up of the great river of this figurative capital; the river constituting the principal resource of the city, although eventually proving, by its drying up, to be the immediate instrument of the destruction of the capital, consequently of the overthrow of this whole empire, or system of delusions. This overthrow of the system of the beast we suppose to be a necessary preparation for the exhibition of truth, afforded under the figure of the new Jerusalem; as the taking of Babylon was formerly a prelude to the restoration of the Jews and the rebuilding of the temple.

We have already had occasion to advert to the typical character of the *great Euphrates*, (§ 219.) We last saw this river in its full power, sending forth its myriads of horsemen, (Rev. ix. 15–21.) and we supposed it to represent a means of propitiation of human device; an opposite of the pure river of the water of life in the midst of the street of the holy city, (Rev. xxi. 1, 2.) We suppose it still to be the same, and, accordingly, to be a typical figure, nearly parallel with that of the rivers and fountains of the earth: that is, as these rivers, &c., are to the earth, so is the Euphrates to Babylon. The earth, the kingdom of the beast, and this proud city being different figures, and each affording a different series of figures, illustrating the same system of false doctrine; each of them possessing features of such illustration peculiar to themselves.

‘And the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared?’ or, according to the Greek, that the way of the kings from the *rising of the sun* might be prepared. The figure, as we have remarked, is borrowed from the successful incursion of the Medes and Persians into Babylonia; but the spiritual allusion must be to certain precursors of the rising of the Sun of righteousness,—certain truths of the gospel, destined by their influence to supersede the fallacies represented by the wonderful power of the beast, and the delusions of the false prophet.

As the last blow of the earthly system was that of showing its *sun*, or the action of its *sun*, to be of a destructive rather than of a saving character; and as the last blow to the kingdom of the beast exhibited that kingdom as one of darkness, and that system as one devoid of righteousness; so the preparatory blow to the destruction of this same system, represented as a great city, is to manifest its destitution of any propitiatory or atoning power. In the subsequent part of the Apocalypse we have further particulars of this proud city; at present we only know that her fall is determined upon, as proclaimed Rev. xiv. 8; and we now see the preparation made for this crisis by the drying up of her river. So, in speaking of a doctrinal system of salvation, the manifestation of its entire fallacy may be said to be prepared, when its only pretended provision of atonement or propitiation is manifested to be destitute of the requisite means of cleansing the sinner from the guilt of his transgressions. Such a manifestation we may suppose to be effected by a just exhibition of the wrath of God, showing the utter impossibility of any adequate means of appeasing that wrath, other than the atonement provided through the vicarious suffering of a divine Redeemer.

These kings of the east, primarily the two powers of Media and Persia, may be supposed to represent two leading doctrines of the gospel, in effect performing the part of forerunners of the manifestation of Jesus, as the Sun of righteousness:—preparing the way for the exhibition of the Saviour in his true character as the Lord our righteousness, and as the only source of the



spiritual light, (his own imputed perfection,) prophetically alluded to, Luke i. 78, as the *day-spring from on high*. These doctrines of truth, whatever they may be, cannot overcome, it may be presumed, the false system represented by Babylon, or by the kingdom of the beast, so long as that system boasts itself of an atoning provision equal to the emergency. This error, therefore, must first be detected and exposed, before these two elements in contemplation can be brought to bear upon the general system of delusion.

Vs. 13, 14. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs (come) out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, (which) go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

Καὶ εἶδον ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ δράκοντος καὶ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ θηρίου καὶ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ ψευδοπροφήτου πνεύματα τρία ἀκάθαρα ὡς βιάτταροι· εἰσὶ γὰρ πνεύματα δαίμονων ποιοῦντα σημεῖα, ἃ ἐκπορεύεται ἐπὶ τοὺς βασιλεῖς τῆς οἰκουμένης ὅλης, συν-αγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν πόλεμον τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης τῆς μεγάλης τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ παντοκράτορος.

§ 365. ‘And I saw,’ &c.—The word *come* is supplied in our common version. The apostle did not see these *spirits* coming out, but he saw them as already out, knowing whence they came; apparently one spirit from each of these mouths. The more correct reading would be, And I saw out of the mouth, &c., three spirits unclean as frogs;—that is, unclean as frogs are unclean. Frogs were Levitically *unclean*, because they belong to a class of animals in the waters without either fins or scales, (Lev. xi. 9–12.) They are of a mixed character—amphibious animals—capable of living both upon the land and water; they inhabit watery places, but the water of these places is stagnant and impure: they thus represent elements of doctrine peculiar to a mixed system of propitiation, as of something partly the work of man and partly the work of God. A system of atonement of this character, is unclean and offensive in the sight of God; its pretended means of ablution being wholly inadmissible as means of salvation—like frogs, Levitically fit neither for sustaining life or for sacrifice.

These evils spirits, coming as they do from the *mouths* of the dragon, &c., we may presume to be *doctrines*; unclean, because their purport and tendency is to establish claims or pretensions of merit, of the unclean or mixed character alluded to. An unclean doctrine must come from an impure source, so the uncleanness of these spirits seems to be given as a reason for their coming from the mouths of these evil principles. The mouth of the dragon is the mouth of the accuser; the unclean doctrine from this source must be one of an accusing character, tending to sustain the action of the law, or to maintain the continuance of the legal economy, upon which the power of accusation necessarily depends. The doctrine

from the mouth of the beast, we suppose to be of the blasphemous character of which the heads of the beast bore the name ; its mouth, as it is said also, Rev. xiii. 5, speaking great things and blasphemies ; that is, tending to place the element of *self* upon an equality with God. The doctrine from the mouth of the false prophet, may be taken to be the *lying* language of misinterpretation ; such a literal or *carnal* construction of the word of revelation, as tends to create an image of self-righteousness, and cause it to become an object of idolatrous worship, akin to the worship of *self*, (the beast.)

The sight of these unclean spirits might be considered a consequence of the pouring out of the sixth vial ; a just exhibition of the wrath of God, tending to show these spirits in their true character ; we are inclined, however, to consider the direct action of this vial confined to the drying up of the Euphrates : the coming forth of these unclean spirits being an indirect consequence, not merely of the effusion of the sixth vial, but of that of all the preceding vials.

The crisis is now approaching when the great contest is to be commenced. The dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, with the kings or powers of the earth on one side ; the Intercessor, with the powers from the risings of the sun, (the kings of the east,) on the other. The operations attending the pouring out of all the preceding vials, have been approximating towards this issue ; the last, the drying up of the great river, having the most direct application to it. The three allied anti-Christian powers may be supposed to contemplate the anticipated trial with more than ordinary anxiety ; they are now sending out their emissaries with the view of summoning all their resources for a last effort ; and this especially, because, the Euphrates being dried up, the opportunity is now presented for the precursors of the Sun of righteousness to advance unobstructed. To this final contest allusion may be made in the prophecies concerning Cyrus, (Is. xlv. 23, and xlv. 1.) The restoration of the Jews from their Babylonish captivity being the temporal allusion, while the restoration of the truths of the gospel peculiar to the covenant of grace, *from their captivity under the reign of error*, is the spiritual allusion. The Medes and Persians as nations, by the conquest of Babylon ushering in the power of Cyrus—Darius the Mede succeeding Belshazzar, the last of the dynasty of Nebuchadnezzar, about A. M. 3448 ; and Cyrus succeeding Darius the Mede about nine years afterwards.—(Vid. Calmet and others.)

§ 366. ' For they are the spirits of devils, (demons, *πνεύματα δαίμονων*.) working miracles, or making signs.—Our common version makes no distinction here between the Greek terms *δαίμονες* and *δαίμων*, although the first signifies strictly an accuser, and is so rendered 2 Tim. iii. 3, and Titus

ii. 3 ;\* while the last is expressive of an unclean spirit, or something the opposite of a messenger of truth. Among the Greeks, the term *demon* was used both in a good and a bad sense, (Rob. Lex. 133,) ἐνδαίμων, ζυχοδαίμων ; but in the Jewish sense it is uniformly the appellation of an unclean spirit, something of an idolatrous character ; as even the tutelary geniuses of the Greeks must have been so considered by the Hebrews. The apostle Paul speaks of certain doctrines of demons, 1 Tim. iv. 1, to which heed would be given in latter times ; a departure from the faith, tending, as appears from the context, to the setting up of certain pretended meritorious observances of man as objects of trust, in opposition or in place of that trust which should be reposed in the living God, the Saviour of all men. These spirits, unclean as frogs, we suppose may be something of the same character ; that is, they are spirits or doctrines carrying with them great appearance of plausibility, working miracles or signs in the sight of men, tending to maintain the empire of *self*, and to ascribe to the creature the glory due to his Creator and Saviour. Babylon, it appears, (Rev. xviii. 2,) was especially manifested to be the habitation of such demons ; so the apostle James associates the term devilish (*demoniacal*, δαιμονώδης) with the terms *earthly* and *sensual*, ἐπίγειος, ψυχικός, which we should render *literal* and *carnal*, natural or physical, as opposed to *spiritual*. The accuser, the beast, and the false prophet, accordingly make use of these carnal weapons or doctrines, to summon the powers of the earthly system for the great contest in contemplation.

‘ Which go forth unto the kings of the earth,’ &c.—We suppose these kings of the earth to be opposites of the kings from the risings of the sun. As the king of Babylon may be supposed to have sent forth his emissaries, summoning to his aid all the tributary powers over which he had a control ; corresponding with which figure, the dominion of Babylon was hyperbolically said, in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, to extend to the end of the earth, Dan. iv. 22 ; and, consequently, its auxiliaries might appropriately be spoken of as the kings of the earth and of the whole world.

‘ And of the whole world.’—According to our common version, there would seem to be two classes of powers here—the kings of the earth, and the kings of the whole world ; but some copies of the Greek omit the words rendered *of the earth* ; confining the action of these unclean spirits to their influence upon one class only—the kings of the whole world. This whole world (οἰκουμένης ὅλης) is apparently the same as that spoken of Rev. iii. 10, “ I also will keep thee from the hour of trial, which is to come upon

\* This term, it is true, is rendered in these passages with the adjunct *false* ; but we have already shown in what sense the devil is not a *false* accuser, (§ 282,) and there is nothing in the Greek term with which the idea of falsehood is necessarily associated.



the whole world ;” and the same as that said to have been deceived or misled by the accuser, (Rev. xii. 9.) An economy the opposite of that spoken of, Heb. i. 6, as the *world* into which the first-begotten was brought, according to the purpose of God, when he said, “ Let all the angels of God worship him ;” and the opposite of that termed, Heb. ii. 5, “ the world to come ;” but the same economy as that of which all the kingdoms are said to have been claimed by Satan, (the accuser,) as peculiarly his, Luke iv. 5 ; and the same as that rendered by the term *the earth*, Luke xxi. 26 ; to which allusion is made Heb. xii. 27, where the great change in contemplation is that of a change from the dispensation of works to the dispensation of grace. The kings of the earth, or of this economy, can be no other than principles dependent upon the legal dispensation, or something of that character.\*

‘ To gather them together to the battle of the great day of God Almighty.’—The contest here alluded to, we suppose to be that described Rev. xix. 17, 21, where it will more properly come under our consideration. The sixth vial brings us only to a knowledge of the preparations making for this battle ; it does not afford us an account of the engagement itself : it informs, however, of the period when it is to take place—the great day of God Almighty—which can be no other day than that elsewhere denominated the day of the Lord, a period repeatedly alluded to both in the Old and New Testaments.

V. 15. Behold, I come as a thief. Bless-  
ed (is) he that watcheth, and keepeth his  
garments, lest he walk naked, and they  
see his shame.

Ἰδοὺ, ἔρχομαι ὡς κλέπτης. μακάριος ὁ  
γρηγορῶν καὶ τηρῶν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ, ἵνα  
μὴ γυμνὸς περιπατῇ καὶ βλέπωσι τὴν ἀσχη-  
μοσύνην αὐτοῦ.

\* The Greek term *οἰκουμένη* (world) is sometimes employed in the New Testament in a physical sense, as applying to this whole sphere of earth ; sometimes in a political sense, as the Roman empire, and sometimes in the spiritual sense in which we here understand it.

In common parlance, the Roman empire was probably frequently spoken of in the time of the apostles, as *the whole world* ; but we think the allusions in the Apocalypse are to the state of things under the Chaldean empire, and not to that under the Roman, and this for several reasons—amongst others, that empire, with its capital, appears to have been brought into existence for a *typical* purpose. Its history was well known, and will always be well known, to all familiar with the scriptures of the Old Testament ; and the employment of the Chaldean capital, Babylon, as a figure, in the odious light in which she is presented, could give no offence to the ruling powers in the early ages of Christianity, nor furnish any unnecessary cause of persecution ;—a precaution which accords especially with the prominent feature of Christian doctrine, inculcating submission to the existing government, in all matters not pertaining directly to the discharge of religious duty.

§ 367. ‘Behold, I come as a thief.’—We should be at a loss to know who was the speaker here, if it were not for the connection of this verse with the preceding, and the correspondence of this declaration with the same words uttered on other occasions. We have just been informed that the battle for which such important preparations are made is to take place on the great day of the Lord ; and we are expressly told, 1 Thess. v. 2, and 2 Pet. iii. 10, that the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night. The declaration, then, is equivalent to an answer to the anticipated question, “When is this great day of God Almighty to come?” It is to come as a thief;—that is, suddenly, when least expected;—which also corresponds with the repeated declaration of Christ in this vision, and elsewhere, that he himself is to come quickly, suddenly, in a day and hour when he is not expected ; the coming of the day of the Lord, and the coming of the Lord, appearing to be uniformly equivalent expressions. Jesus Christ, therefore, is here himself the interlocutor, and the occasion of his being so is, that the coming of the great day, just mentioned, and his own coming, are identic. This last contest with the beast corresponds also, apparently, with the trial compared by the prophet to the action of a refiner’s fire, and of fuller’s soap.

‘Blessed is he that watcheth,’ &c. ; or, Happy is he that watcheth—happy, because he is always ready—he cannot be taken by surprise. The word *μακάριος*, translated *blessed*, is applicable to the advantage enjoyed by those to whom it is applied : a meaning distinct from that of *εὐλογητός*, which our common version also renders by *blessed*, but which conveys essentially the idea of praise.

This admonitory address or declaration may be of the same character as that attributed to the general proposition, Rev. xiv. 13, “Blessed (happy) are the dead who die in the Lord ;” or, as that at the commencement of the book, Rev. i. 3, “Blessed is he that readeth.” It is not part of the narrative, but something addressed to the reader or hearer, suggested, as it were, to the mind of the narrator by this portion of the narrative. In the introductory addresses to the churches, the speaker, Jesus, had repeatedly forewarned them of his coming suddenly, and he now seems to have reached that portion of his unveiling of himself in which this coming suddenly is to be exemplified. As we have already remarked, in a literal sense the hour of death must be a sudden coming of the day of the Lord to every one ; but we suppose the allusion here to be something in a spiritual sense, and that the coming in contemplation is something to be met with in this Apocalyptic.

Watching is the opposite of lying down and sleeping, (§ 85 ; ) and the main idea to be associated with it is that of continual readiness : “They

that sleep, sleep in the night," says Paul, "but let us who are of the day be sober." To be in the night, is to be in darkness, the position peculiar to the kingdom of the beast : to be of the day, is to be in the *light*, a position of righteousness or of justification—clothed with the imputed perfection of the Sun of righteousness.

'And keepeth his garments.'—It is very evident that the garments spoken of here are garments of salvation. Happy is he who, in the exercise of his faith, always finds himself clothed in a garment of salvation ; and great is his advantage, who is in fact clothed with such a garment, although he may not be himself aware of it. This is an indisputable axiom. It would be indisputable if nothing more were revealed respecting it, and perhaps it is so to be considered here—the questions still remaining to be answered, What is this garment, and how is it to be procured ? How can one be always in this state of watchfulness, or state of readiness ? or, How can one be always clothed with these garments of salvation ?

§ 363. The whole tenor of this Apocalypse shows us that the merits of man can afford no such garment or covering as is capable of hiding the guilt of sin in the sight of God. We have already learned enough from this revelation, to know that the robe of Christ's righteousness alone is sufficient for this purpose ; and that the garments here spoken of must be the covering of his merits, and not that of the disciple's own pretended virtues ; such pretended merits being all of the *moth-eaten* character of the garments of the rich, spoken of James v. 2, or of those of the rags described by the prophet, (Is. lxiv. 6.) If, then, the only garment of salvation be that of the merits of Christ, how can it be called the disciple's garment ? or how, in keeping this covering about him, can he be said to keep *his* garments ? Evidently they can only be said to be *his*, because they have been freely *given* to him. Happy, therefore, it may be said, is he who has received such garments, and happy is he who *keepeth* them ; who appreciates the gift, values it, *keeps* it as he would a treasure or pearl of great price—prizes it, too, for the purpose for which it was intended : for no one can be said to appreciate a garment in which he is unwilling to appear, especially on an occasion for which it was intended that he should appear in it ; the gift or present having been made him for this purpose.

It was formerly the custom of the Ottoman court to entertain the ministers or representatives of foreign powers with a magnificent feast. On these occasions both food and raiment were provided for the guests. The ambassador, with his retinue, marched in procession to the palace, and attendants were in waiting to offer to each guest, upon his entrance, a robe, without the covering of which he was deemed unqualified for admittance to the table of the sovereign. The Grand Signor himself witnessed the feast from a secret recess provided for the purpose, without participating in the



entertainment; while heralds proclaimed to the multitude that the nation or people thus represented, sensible of their dependence upon the benevolence of the Turkish ruler, had humbly sent to him *to be fed and clothed at his expense*. On these occasions, if a guest had refused the garment proffered him, or if, having received it, he had not *kept* it, and had attempted to sit at the imperial table without it, his conduct would have been deemed not merely an act of folly, but something equivalent to a rebellious contumacy. On the other hand, it might be said of those who were careful to conform to the requisitions of this extraordinary etiquette, Happy are those who not only receive these garments, but who *keep* them, and are thus at all times ready to attend the feast.

The Asiatic custom is, we believe, one of very ancient date, and was probably more familiarly known in the days of the apostles, than it has been in modern times. Allusion seems to have been made to a custom of this kind by our Saviour, in his parable of the Supper, in which an account is given of a guest gathered in, and even compelled to come in, from the highways and hedges, and afterwards cast out for want of a wedding garment,—a garment which apparently is supposed to have been proffered him, but which he did not *keep*. The allusion in this passage of the Apocalypse may have a similar bearing.

‘Lest he walk naked,’ &c.—The words translated garments, τὰ ἱμάτια, properly apply to upper or outer garments; and the term naked, in Scripture, does not necessarily involve the idea of nudity, in the ordinary sense. The custom of the ancients was, probably, very much the same as that of the Asiatics, and, indeed, of a large portion of mankind, especially of the poorer classes, at the present day, viz., that of lying down to sleep in the same under garments as those which have been worn during the day. A person roused from sleep in this state, and obliged to sally out without having time to put on his upper garments, mantle, cloak, &c., would be deemed *naked*, according to the scriptural use of the term. So the nakedness of man in the sight of God consists perhaps as much in his pretensions to a covering of his own merits as in his overt acts of transgression. Without the upper garment of his Saviour’s righteousness the disciple is found naked; with it, although not unclothed, *he is clothed upon*, (2 Cor. v. 3, 4.) The shame of his nakedness consists as much in the filthy rags and moth-eaten *under garments* of his self-righteousness, as in what is commonly considered his positive sinfulness. His shame is exhibited not merely in being without garments, but in being without the garments of salvation. So the shame of the *guest* at the wedding-feast, was not in his absolute nakedness, but in his want of the robe or mantle requisite for the occasion.

There is a sudden change of figure here, similar to some that we have noticed in other passages. The battle of the great day of God Almighty is

equivalent to the coming of the Lord; the coming of the Lord is elsewhere spoken of as the sudden appearance of the bridegroom, or as a call to a marriage feast. The figure of the battle is thus dropped, and, instead of calling upon the disciple to put on the whole armour of faith, the idea of a sudden call to the celebration of a feast is apparently introduced, and the absolute necessity of preparation for it in respect to the proper apparel is held forth.

The admonition will apply either to principles personified, or to disciples; those doctrinal principles only which are involved in the truth of salvation, through the imputed righteousness of Christ, being able to stand in the day of trial. So likewise with disciples, it is only those depending upon this spiritual clothing who can be prepared to meet the Lord at his coming. The believer, trusting in the Redeemer's righteousness, and in the washing of his atonement, is at all times ready: he is found watching, as one prepared, even with his upper garment, to go forth at the summons of his master.

V. 16. And he gathered them together *Καὶ συνήγαγεν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν τόπον τὸν καλούμενον Ἰβζακιάστὶ Ἰσχυαζδών.*  
 Armageddon.

§ 369. 'And he gathered,' &c.—This is to be read in connection with the 14th verse, the narrative being resumed; as if the parenthetical admonition just commented upon had not intervened. The spirits unclean as frogs went forth to gather together the powers of the earth to the battle of the great day of God Almighty; and He, that is, God Almighty, gathered them together, through this instrumentality, into a place called Armageddon; the kings from the risings of the sun being also assembled, as we may suppose, on the same ground. The armies are thus seen to be prepared on both sides, and the narrative closes, for the present, as on the eve of a conflict. The further particulars are to be learnt from the developments attending the pouring out of the seventh vial.

'Into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon;' or, according to the Greek, into *the* place, as if the place had been previously mentioned. We suppose the term *place* to be put here for a certain position of principles peculiarly adapted to a test of their correctness.

There seems to be no such place as Armageddon mentioned elsewhere in the Scriptures. Some have supposed the appellation to refer to Megiddo, a place remarkable for a double slaughter, Judges v. 19. and 2 Kings xxiii. 29. Rob. Lex.: this double slaughter, if such be the allusion, being perhaps a type of the great contest between truth and error here contemplated—the kings of Canaan and the king of Egypt representing the powers or principles symbolized in the Apocalypse by the kings of the earth. Armageddon, according to Leusden, signifies, among other meanings, the Mount

of the Gospel—(*mons evangelii, vel evangelizationis aut mons pomorum, vel fructuum, sive electorum.*) We may suppose it to be a figure of a certain manifestation of gospel truth of such a character as to be the means of the final destruction of all opposite errors. The *mount of the gospel* may be equivalent to the gospel itself, or to the gospel spiritually and properly understood,—understood in such a way as to perceive the conflict between truth and error in respect to the plan of salvation. So, as “a city set upon a hill cannot be hid,” a battle fought upon a mountain may be said to have taken place in a position peculiarly conspicuous. If we would look for an exhibition of the battle of this great day of the Lord, we must look for it in the gospel. As was said of the substitute ram provided for an offering in the place of the only child of the patriarch, “In the mount it will be seen,” so, certainly, we may say of the great substitute provided in behalf of man, *In the gospel it will be seen.* In this sense we may render the passage here—And he gathered them together in a place called the Mount of the Gospel. The highly favored disciples, Peter, and James, and John, were taken into *a high mountain apart*, where they were permitted to witness Moses and Elias ministering to their Master in his glory; so, if we would behold the law and the prophets ministering to an exhibition of the glory of the Lord our righteousness, we must look for it in the GOSPEL.

## SEVENTH VIAL.

V. 17. And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

Καὶ ὁ ἕβδομος ἐξέχευε τὴν φιάλην αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν αἶρα· καὶ ἔβη θὺς φωνὴ μεγάλη ἀπὸ τοῦ θρόνου [τοῦ οὐρανοῦ], ἀπὸ τοῦ θρόνου, λέγουσα· γέγονε·

§ 370. ‘And the seventh angel poured out,’ &c.—Here the preposition ἐπὶ, instead of being rendered upon, is translated *into*. We are to bear in mind, however, that with an accusative, as here used, it may signify *about* or *concerning*. This seventh development of divine wrath is something about or concerning the *air*.

The *air* is mentioned in but one other place of the Apocalypse, Rev. ix. 2, in commenting upon which we have already noticed (§ 207) the distinction between *air* and *ether*. The first, being applicable to the atmosphere immediately around this globe, rendered dense by earthly exhalations, we suppose to be put apocalyptically for the literal or carnal medium of construction, or interpretation, through which heavenly things (the doctrines of the gospel) are contemplated; a medium of construction so loaded with earthly apprehensions that the spiritual meaning of revelation is not perceived. Paul speaks of the prince of the power of the *air*, (Eph.



ii. 1, 2,) as something corresponding with what he terms "the course of this world." The power of the air, corresponding also, apparently, with the spirit working in the children of disobedience. These children of disobedience we suppose to be not merely individuals out of the church, careless and reckless of the subject of religion, but professing members of the visible church, refusing to submit themselves to the terms of the gospel—rejecting the offer of salvation by grace through the merits of Christ; the spirit working in them being a spirit of self-justification, and of self-sufficiency. Like the *foolish* and *bewitched* Galatians, they refused to *obey* the gospel, (the truth,) because they believe they can do without it, expecting to be "made perfect by the flesh," or by their own fulfilment of the law. This spirit of self-justification, we take to be what Paul denominates the *power of the air*; a spirit or power derived from a literal or carnal medium of construction, through which the truths of the gospel are contemplated.

A true exhibition of the nature of divine wrath is now applied as a test to this medium of interpretation, showing its tendency, as of the *letter*, to condemnation. The result of this process is the destruction of the earthly or Babylonish system described in the remainder of this chapter, and further illustrated in the two succeeding chapters; the subjects of those two chapters being, as we apprehend, amplifications of the nineteenth verse of the present chapter.

'And there came a great voice out of the temple,' &c.—This must be the same great voice as that which gave the command to the seven angels to pour out their vials upon the earth; the air being an element of the earthly system. The several processes are now completed; the last being that to which the greatest importance appears to be attached, if such a distinction be admissible. The rule of construction (the medium of contemplating subjects of revelation) once corrected, the destruction of every false system may be said to follow as a matter of course, while the way is at the same time opened for a perfect development of truth.

This great voice is said to come out of the temple in heaven, from the throne, or from the heavenly temple from the throne; reminding us that the exhibitions of these vials pertain especially to the development of principles peculiar to the worship and to the sovereignty of the Most High.

'It is done,' *ἔτελεσται*.—The expression is not exactly equivalent to the declaration, It is finished, (*τετέλεσται*.) John xix. 30; it rather implies the existence of a thing as actually present, which was previously only expected. The time has now come—the thing expected is brought forth—alluding, perhaps, to the promise of the mighty angel, Rev. x. 7. that the mystery of God should be finished (*τετέλεσθαι*) in the sounding of the seventh trumpet. The last vial of the last trumpet having been poured out upon the *air*, correcting the mode of construction, the time has come for the final development of this

mystery. Nothing is here said, or is again said in this book, of the faith and patience of the saints, as on other occasions. The last obstacle has been removed—the catastrophe is now immediately at hand.

V. 18. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, (and) so great.

Καὶ ἐγένοντο ἄστραπαὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ βροταί, καὶ σεισμός ἐγένετο μέγας, ὅσος οὐκ ἐγένετο ἀπ' οὗ οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἐγένοντο ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, τηλοῦ τοῦ σεισμοῦ οὗτω μέγας.

§ 371. ‘And there were voices,’ &c.—Prior to the sounding of the seven trumpets, when the fire from the altar was cast into the earth, there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake, Rev. viii. 5. So, on the opening of the temple, prior to the developments of the twelfth chapter, there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail. The present is, therefore, the *third* exhibition of the terrors of the law;—this earthquake far exceeding the others, and the hail, as appears from a subsequent verse, being of an unusual magnitude. The characteristics are the same, but some extraordinary importance appears to be attached to this third commotion.

If we suppose the action of this vial upon the air to be something affecting what commentators term the *rules of exegesis*, as applied to the explanation of the Scriptures, we may imagine a more than ordinary display of the requisitions of the law to be called for to effect a change in a long adopted mode of interpretation, the tendency of which has been virtually to represent the necessity of some righteousness, some fulfilment of the law on the part of man, as a condition of his salvation. An unusual commotion or shaking (σεισμός) must be requisite to effect the change of long established rules of exposition; and the operation of this change must be attended with an unusual commotion of the minds and opinions of those directing their attention to the subject; all or either of these effects may be indicated by the action of this earthquake.

In addition to the earthquakes we have enumerated, as connected with voices, &c., there was a great earthquake on the opening of the sixth seal, when the sun became black as sackcloth, and the moon as blood, and the heaven departed as a scroll, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places, Rev. vi. 12–17. There was also an earthquake when the two witnesses ascended up into heaven, and a tenth part of the city fell, Rev. xi. 13; the present, however, exceeds them all, as it is also the last mentioned in the Apocalypse. It may be to this that allusion is made, Haggai ii. 6, 7, “Yet once a little while, and I will shake the heavens, (the air,) and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come.” To which also the apostle refers, Heb. xii. 26, 27: “But now he hath promised, saying, Yet

once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven ; and this *once more* signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things which are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain."

Both these passages suggest the idea that, prior to the perfect development of the economy of grace as superseding that of works, there must necessarily be a peculiar shaking of other systems—worldly systems of salvation—especially that represented by Babylon, that great city. At the same time, we are to bear in mind that an earthquake is not a destruction of the earth itself, but only a commotion of its elements ;—so of an airquake or tornado. But an earthquake may be the means of destruction to the things resting upon it, (cities, towns, &c.) The worldly or earthly elements remain, notwithstanding the commotion so destructive to the systems or plans of salvation figuratively appearing as things depending upon the earth.

Vs. 19, 20. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell : and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

Καὶ ἐγένετο ἡ πόλις ἡ μεγάλη εἰς τρία μέρη, καὶ αἱ πόλεις τῶν ἐθνῶν ἔπεσον· καὶ Βαβυλὼν ἡ μεγάλη ἐμνήσθη ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ, δοῦναι αὐτῇ τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ. Καὶ πᾶσα νῆσος ἔφυγε, καὶ ὄρη οὐκ εὗρέθησαν.

§ 372. 'And the great city was divided,' &c.—This great city and Babylon mentioned immediately afterwards we suppose to be identic, especially as Babylon is elsewhere termed that great city, Rev. xiv. 8 ; or according to some editions of the Greek, *the great city*, Βαβυλὼν ἡ πόλις ἡ μεγάλη—great, because great in her pretensions—proud, and accounted great in human estimation.

This great city is said to be not destroyed, but divided into three parts—something preparatory to destruction ; to come into three parts being a figure perhaps of a doctrinal system of great pretensions undergoing an analysis, necessarily resulting in a manifestation of its fallacy. As the name imports, we suppose Babylon to represent a confused system of salvation—a confused mixture of principles or doctrinal elements—something partly legal and partly evangelical. Even this confusion, however, may be susceptible of divisions. There may be three different aspects in which the city is to be contemplated, corresponding with what we have suggested of three senses, (§ 191)—each of these aspects presenting a mixture, one bearing a certain analogy to the other ; or the city, as a system, may be divisible into three different elements, each of which is of a certain mixed composition. We prefer the last construction, more especially as this is the first time in which the word translated *part* (μέρος) is to be found in the Apocalypse, either in the singular or plural ; the English term having been *supplied* by our translators where it occurs previously.



We do not take this great city to represent any thing professedly anti-Christian or infidel ; on the contrary, we suppose it to be an erroneous system of faith, prevalent in the views of professing Christians, and in its general features not confined to any single denomination. We suppose the system to be particularly of a mercenary character, and distinguished for its tendency to pride and vainglory, as exalting the pretensions of human merit, and assuming for man the glory of his own redemption.

A true system of redemption corresponding with God's plan of salvation may be said to consist of three essential parts, each of these parts having its peculiar elements or principles : first, its views of divine justice ; second, its views of man's sinfulness ; third, its views of the remedy by which man's sinfulness is to be reconciled with divine justice. Every religious system, indeed, may be supposed to be possessed of these parts ; for all admit the perfection of God, and the imperfection of man, and profess to devise some scheme by which these two opposite characteristics may be reconciled to each other. The system of Babylon may be thus divisible, although each of its parts is constituted of a confused mixture of truth and falsehood. It is professedly Christian—it borrows its leading features from the true doctrines of the gospel, and may be termed a *simulation* of God's plan of redemption. It has its views of divine justice, brought down to a human standard, in the appreciation of moral good and evil. It has its views of man's sinfulness ; but in this the good qualities of the sinner are supposed to be a certain *set-off* in part for his evil actions, while these last are noticed no further than they appear in his outward conduct. The distance between these two extremes being thus diminished, the means of reconciliation are supposed to be nothing more than that which is within the compass of man's ability to perform. In fine, the Babylonish system has its element of propitiation or of justification, professedly on the gospel plan, but in effect ascribing the work to some merit in man, by which his reconciliation to his God is placed in the light of a compensation for certain services, performances, or good conduct of his own ; these merits being the merchandise with which Babylon has enriched herself.

We suggest this classification principally for the purpose of showing that, although a fallacious system of faith, like the one in contemplation, may have its three parts distinctly marked, it may be notwithstanding a mixed and confused system—a system presupposing an amalgamation of the merits of Christ with those of the disciple as the means of salvation. Any insufficient view of the justice of God, or of the sinfulness of sin, involves a corresponding error in appreciating the nature and extent of the remedial element of reconciliation. If man, either from the mere lenity of his sovereign Judge, or from his own capabilities, be able to atone for his own transgressions, or to work out a propitiation of his own, salvation by **IMPUTED**

righteousness becomes unnecessary : righteousness, in such case, contrary to the apostle's implied declaration, (Gal. iii. 21,) would come by the law, and God would be deprived of the glory and gratitude due for the exercise of his sovereign grace.

We may here notice a further distinction between the divine scheme of *religion*\* and that of man's devising. In the first, the motive of conduct may be said to constitute a *fourth* part ; the disciple there devoting himself to the service of his benefactor, because he has been redeemed. In the human system the motive of action is involved in the third part ; the disciple serving or obeying in order that he may be redeemed. Babylon is thus divisible into three parts ; the holy city, on the contrary, we find described (Rev. xxi. 12-16,) particularly as lying *four square*, having on every side an equal number of gates. She is not spoken of as divisible ; but if we were to consider her as such, we should certainly contemplate her as composed of four parts, and not of three.

§ 373. 'And the cities of the nations fell.'—As the great city represents a great system, so we suppose the cities of the nations to represent subordinate systems—powers of the earth subject and subservient perhaps to the great city ; but not so directly *simulations* of the true plan of salvation as the imperial city ; Babylon being probably contemplated in reference to the other cities of Asia, as Rome was afterwards considered in relation to the nations around her. Both of these cities pretended to a supremacy of power ; and, as figures, they may either of them be taken for what they professed themselves to be. The clause might be rendered, "And the cities of the *Gentiles* fell," which would place these cities in something of a different light.

Babylon literally indeed was a Gentile city, but Babylon figuratively may represent Jerusalem in a perverted state—the true system perverted—and as perverted, possessing a mixture of truth and error—an amalgamation, as we have already termed it. The cities of the *Gentiles*, on the contrary, may represent systems which never were true ; scarcely possessing an admixture of gospel truth, even in the smallest degree. These systems therefore fall first, as their errors are most immediately exposed.

By way of illustration we may take for granted, what was probably the case, that the Babylonians in the period of their glory enjoyed a very considerable knowledge of the true God, and of his dealings with men, and of

\* We use here the term *religion* (from the Latin *religo*, to bind) in what may be termed its primitive sense, as applicable to the *obligation* under which man is placed to serve the Deity—"God's plan of salvation" applies to the manner in which the sinner is redeemed ; the "divine scheme of *religion*" comprehends this plan, while it further applies to the *new* obligation of service resulting from it. There is therefore no inconsistency in the position that the first consists of three parts and the last of four.

his purposes in behalf of man, acquired from their intimacy with the Hebrews. It could hardly have been otherwise but this knowledge was perverted: the wisdom of God as they received it from the Israelites was mixed up with the wisdom of their so-called wise men, and their system of theology was probably an amalgamation of the elements of idolatry with those of truth—a perverted Judaism. Thus with Babylon, as a figure, we may associate an idea of mixture not belonging to what is intended to be represented by the cities of the Gentiles. So, in a figurative point of view, if the inhabitants of Jerusalem be taken to represent elements of the true system, the captivity of the Jews in Babylon may represent the state of restraint under which the elements of the gospel plan of salvation are placed by being subjected to the construction of a self-righteous, legal, and mercenary system; the principles of the gospel under such restraint being disabled from bearing their proper evidence to the truth—unable to sing the Lord's song in a strange land, (Ps. cxxxvii. 4)—a peculiarity furnishing another reason for this apocalyptic discrimination between the *great city* and the cities of the nations. Babylon, in this respect also, is a *mixed* system, because she holds the elements of a free salvation in the captivity of bondage, or under the constraint of legal construction.

‘And great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.’—The destruction of Babylon is not yet described here, but that it takes place immediately is implied. Accordingly we suppose, as already intimated, the particulars given of it in the two subsequent chapters to be an amplification of what is here stated. Our understanding of this cup of the wine of the fierceness of the wrath of God, will depend upon the understanding we may obtain of the very minute description hereafter given of the fall of this great city. As it is said here, that “Babylon came in remembrance,” or was remembered before God, so it is said in reference to the cause of her destruction, Rev. xviii. 5, “For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath *remembered* her iniquities;” thus identifying the dispensations of wrath particularized in that chapter with the remembrance spoken of her in this. We may also notice that this cup of wrath appears to be the same, by the description here given of it, as that to be participated in by every one worshipping the beast and his image, and receiving his mark in the forehead or in the hand, (Rev. xiv. 9;) consequently we may presume Babylon, with her inhabitants—this false system, with its elements—to have been a worshipper of the beast and of his image, &c.; and thus to have become obnoxious to the denunciation of the third mid-heaven angel, while she is equally obnoxious to the same sentence of destruction, for the reason given Rev. xiv. 8, that she had made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. She is thus the subject of a double visitation—tributive and retributive.



‘And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.’—At the opening of the sixth seal, it is said every mountain and island were moved out of their places. On that occasion we considered them merely as positions of refuge, (§ 167.) Here we are inclined to consider them more particularly as the portion of refuges constituting their foundations; a mountain or an island being that upon which a city may be built, and cities, as places of refuge, depending upon their sites or foundations for security. In consequence of this great earthquake, the cities of the nations generally, as it is said, have fallen; and the mountains and islands being not only moved, but having entirely disappeared, there remains apparently no earthly foundation of sufficient stability to encourage the rebuilding of these cities. Babylon alone still stands, though divided in the midst; but Babylon was a city of the plain—her foundations were in the dust. The utmost ingenuity and labour and power of man have been employed, it is true, in giving strength to these foundations, but the time has now come when all these efforts will prove to have been unavailing. With the exception of Babylon, the whole earth may be contemplated as one vast plain; for we suppose the appearance of Mount Zion in this picture to be hardly admissible. The figure of the old Jerusalem (Jerusalem in bondage) is involved in that of Babylon; and when the new Jerusalem makes her appearance, she is to be seen coming down from God out of heaven. The earth, such as it is now supposed to be, affords no refuge; and the people of God flying from Babylon, as they are admonished to do, Rev. xviii. 4, can be supposed to look for no permanent rest till they reach the holy city from above.

V. 21. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, (every stone) about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

Καὶ χάλαζα μεγάλη ὡς ταλάντια καταβαίνει ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους· καὶ ἐβλασφήμησαν οἱ ἄνθρωποι τὸν θεὸν ἐκ τῆς πληγῆς τῆς χαλάζης, ὅτι μεγάλη ἐστὶν ἡ πληγὴ αὐτῆς σφόδρα.

§ 374. ‘And there fell,’ &c.; or, hail great as a talent fell from heaven upon *the* men, &c.,—the men of Babylon, and the men of the cities of the Gentiles; those supposed to have escaped. A multitude in a vast plain without a shelter, exposed to such hail as is here described, must be in a position of certain destruction. These men being elements of these earthly systems—erroneous principles, elsewhere termed lies—are now subjected to that visitation which is to *sweep them away*, Is. xxviii. 17. The systems to which these *lying* elements belonged have fallen, except only the great system which is being destroyed; it remains therefore only to annihilate these scattered, disconnected principles of false doctrine; and this process is now in operation. There have been two visitations of hail already spoken of,

Rev. viii. 7, and xi. 19; but the present, like the earthquake with which it is accompanied, is represented as something far exceeding any thing before experienced.

‘Great as a talent.’—The Jewish talent measure of weight is estimated at from one hundred and fourteen to one hundred and twenty-five pounds, troy; the Attic talent, at fifty-six pounds, (Rob. Lex. 741.) Either of these it must be admitted is enormous for the weight of a hailstone. The expression must be deemed a hyperbolical description of hail of irresistible weight, carrying with it certain destruction.

‘And men blasphemed,’ &c.; or rather, *the* men blasphemed.—*The* men being elements of the false systems represented by the cities, the effect of this judgment upon them was that of eliciting their blasphemous character; the hail operating as a test in the same manner, and with the same result, as in the case of the pouring out of the fifth vial upon the seat of the beast. So an exhibition or manifestation of the blasphemous character of the principles of a system professing to be Christian, must be equivalent to the final destruction of such principles. A system overthrown by an exhibition of its fallacy, by the undermining of its foundations, and by proving its elements to be *blasphemous*, must necessarily be entirely destroyed, and such we suppose to be the implied condition of all the systems here alluded to; the plague of the hail sweeping away not only the refuges, but the last refuges of lies. There is something final in its action, as terminating a series of judgments. With this last visitation the chapter closes, the narrative being for the present suspended, to allow of a relation of the particulars of the fall of Babylon, as given in the two following chapters.

#### RETROSPECT.

§ 375. It is a striking peculiarity of the occurrences narrated in this chapter, that the whole process from which they originate emanates from the temple, and that there is no further mention of the temple in the Apocalypse till we reach nearly the close of it, where, in speaking of the holy city, (Rev. xxi. 22,) the apostle says he saw *no temple* therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. From these circumstances it may be fairly inferred, that after the purification of the temple service by the pouring out of these seven vials the worship of God is supposed to be placed in its proper light. Prior to this the state of the temple service is such as is adverted to by the prophet, Is. lxvi. 1–7, “He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man,” &c. The sacrifices may be literally such as are prescribed, but the motive being selfish and mercenary, the

whole worship or service—the offering, whatever it may be—is unclean in the sight of God.

So in the time alluded to by the prophet, “a voice from the *temple*” called for a development of the truth, in the same manner and in the same sense as at the commencement of this chapter it commands the pouring out of the seven vials;—this voice in both instances being the voice of God and of the Lamb; for such is the heavenly temple—the spiritual temple of the holy city.

It is a characteristic of the *man of sin*, 2 Thes. ii. 4, that he “sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God,” making himself an object of worship in the place of God. Such was also a prominent feature in the character of the *mystic* king of Babylon, spoken of under the appellation of Lucifer, Is. xiv. 12, and whose fall may be supposed to be involved in that of Babylon, predicted in the same chapter.

There is a state of error in the mind of every individual disciple, as well as in the apprehension of mankind in general, and in the doctrinal views of the Christian community particularly, on the subject of the worship or service of God; corresponding, we think, with what is here figuratively set forth both by prophets and apostles. There is a like correspondence with what is predicted of the removal of these errors in the experience of the Christian, as he advances in a knowledge of the truth; and we think a like correspondence may be found in the changes wrought in the views of Christians generally, as the development of gospel truth progresses throughout the world.

We do not mean that every disciple of Christ is carried through this process of intellectual development before leaving the present state of existence, or that any particular grade of such advancement in knowledge is a condition precedent of salvation; we mean only that the development is of that kind which may take place in the mind of any believer, and which probably has taken place in the understandings of many, who may not have been able to describe or to define it. With many the process of illumination may be gradual, with others it may be as the overwhelming light by which the once persecuting Paul was struck to the earth. With all it must be instantaneous, if not previously experienced, as they change this state of imperfect apprehension for one in which they are to see as they are seen, and know as they are known.

We have already remarked, (§ 324,) that the only motive by which the service (worship) of God can be characterized, is that which must be the motive for this service throughout eternity. To implant this motive, the removal of every error of an opposite character or tendency is indispensable.

“The Lord,” it is said, Malachi iii. 1, “shall suddenly come to his



*temple*, even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in ; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.” This prophecy was primarily fulfilled when Jesus daily taught in the temple ; when he purified the temple of those who frequented it for mercenary purposes ; and when, as the result of the accomplishment of his mission, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, and the holy of holies—the secret of the tabernacle—was openly exposed to view. But there is also another, a spiritual fulfilment of this prophecy, in that development of the revealed word of God, which may be said to *purify the sons of Levi*, by exhibiting the pure principles upon which alone God can be really served or worshipped. This process of purification we suppose to be that represented by the action of the seven vials.

§ 376. The disciple cannot serve God *in spirit and in truth* so long as he supposes *his position* to be that of working out his own salvation by his own merits. His motives of action must necessarily in that position be selfish ; and whatever he performs from such motives can only add to his uncleanness in the sight of God. His principle of conduct bears the mark of the beast ; his idol of worship is an *image* of his own supposed righteousness, and the fruit of his mercenary labour is “ a noisome and grievous sore.”

The error of man’s dependence upon his own righteousness, as in an earthly position, arising from an insufficient appreciation of the nature of infinite justice, it is not till that justice is exhibited in its truly fearful character that this error can be removed, and consequently, that the motive of selfishness in the service to be performed can be eradicated. The disciple must be convinced that escape from the elements of divine justice is something entirely beyond his own strength, and that as he cannot be saved from so great wrath of God by any works of his own, so neither can he claim any glory from his deliverance. The *sea* must be manifested to be a sea of *blood*.

If, although convinced of sin and under just apprehensions of the vengeance of the law, the disciple supposes himself to be in a position in which he can purify himself, or atone for his past transgressions by his own works or actions, his motive in performing these works must necessarily be *selfish*. He may profess to serve God by what he does ; he may profess himself a miserable sinner, but so long as he believes himself to be in a condition to effect a propitiation for himself, so long he cannot serve God from a pure motive of grateful love. He must be made to see that, in the nature of the case, any atonement of his own, adequate to the emergency, must necessarily require the forfeiture of his eternal life—that the rivers and fountains of the earth are *blood*.

If the disciple believe his earthly position (notwithstanding all that has been alluded to above) to be such as that the action of the Sun of righteousness imparts to the works of man a character of righteousness—that, having

passed through a certain change, he is now to exhibit merits upon the existence of which his salvation depends, his motive of action, as before, must be selfish and mercenary. He must be occupied in serving himself, while he professes to serve God. To convince the believer of this error, the nature of divine wrath must be so exhibited as to manifest the entire nothingness of any pretensions to a goodness or merit of his own,—as much so subsequent to his conversion as before ;—the only righteousness equal to the wrath of God, being that of Jehovah himself: which also, in the nature of the case, can be obtained only by *imputation*. All other pretensions must be proved to wither and perish in comparison with this ; the *Sun* of righteousness acting upon them as with a *burning heat*.

The disciple cannot worship (serve) God in reality, so long as he supposes himself to be the author of his own eternal happiness,—so long as he supposes his position to admit of his walking in the light of a righteousness of his own creation. He must be made to feel, to realize, that his only hope and trust is in the imputed righteousness of Jehovah, or he cannot possess that pure motive of gratitude for the gift of eternal life, which is an essential ingredient in the worship of God. The wrath of God must be so exhibited as to show the entire destitution of any element of righteousness where *self* is in any degree the object of reliance. The kingdom of the beast must be manifested to be *full of darkness*.

§ 377. Men are generally willing to admit themselves to be sinners, they talk much of the frailty of human nature, and *self-righteousness* is almost universally a topic of reprobation. But a prevailing error with all mankind, and perhaps especially with those who profess Christianity, appears to be, that, whatever their imperfections, as they call them, may be, there is in something that they do, or that they may do, a redeeming quality—something which, even in the sight of God, is to operate as an element of atonement or of propitiation. Every one has something of this kind, which may be termed his *great river*—his great resource for eternal life: his candour, his honesty, his inoffensiveness, his works of penitence, his moral reformation, his observance of ordinances, his holiness, his zeal, his benevolence, or his liberality. This is, indeed, but a part of the system of *self*—the kingdom of that despot is *within us*, and Babylon maintains her dominion in the heart ; and her pleasant, her *fructifying river*,\* as she vainly boasts of it, is one of the last objects of self-dependence ever to be surrendered. This error, however, must be removed, before the sovereignty of God and the freeness of his salvation can be exhibited. So long as the disciple is governed by the influence of self or of selfishness he cannot *serve* God, in the strict sense of the term ; that is, acting from the motive of serving God,

\* Euphrates, 𐤍𐤒𐤕, *Frugifer, sive fructificans aut crescens*—fruitful, growing, &c.—(Leusden.)

and not of that of serving himself. So long as his design is to propitiate the favour of his supreme Judge, by works of his own performing, he is unable to act with any other view than that of promoting his own interest, while the tendency of his pretensions to effect such propitiation is to rob his divine Redeemer of the glory of his salvation. The Euphrates with every one must be dried up ere the elements of gospel truth can take their proper place in the understanding; and this operation can only be performed by a due exhibition of the wrath of God, showing the utter inadequacy of any such human provision as an element of eternal life.

We do not pretend to point out what particular gospel doctrines are figuratively spoken of as the *kings from the rising of the sun*; but if we are right in ascribing the primary allusion to the two kingly powers, Media and Persia, we may suppose these powers to represent the two peculiar doctrines of Christianity, supposed on a former occasion (§ 322) to be falsified or simulated by the false prophet, and, thus counterfeited, to be symbolized by the two horns of the beast from the land—the weapons by which the worship of the beast and of his image may be said to be enforced.

Nor do we pretend to define further than we have done, (§ 365,) the doctrines or elements of doctrine represented by the unclean spirits from the mouths of the dragon, beast, and false prophet. Their real character will be better ascertained when they are seen in operation, striving to prevent the manifestation of the truth in the person of Him, who is to exhibit himself as the overcoming principle of sovereign grace, the Lord our righteousness.

The last class of errors in the way of the worship of God is that occasioned by the medium through which religious truth is contemplated—a medium upon which apparently the preservation of Babylon, or the cohesion of the parts of this great city instrumentally depends, and upon which also depends the foundation of every erroneous system of salvation. The true worship (service) of God calls for the purification of this medium. HE cannot be worshipped without it—the rules of *exegesis*, spiritually speaking, are to be changed, (whatever commotion it may occasion,) in order that the kingdom of the beast, the reign of self, may be entirely overthrown and the mercenary system of Babylon entirely destroyed. We think this process will be equivalent to that of substituting, as Paul terms it, the spirit for the letter.

§ 378. This change also is to be brought about by a just exhibition of the wrath of divine justice; showing that nothing short of an entire and perfect righteousness can meet the requisitions of the law—consequently that the means of salvation must be entirely of God; that, as he will not share his glory with another, so he will not admit of the admixture in the smallest degree of any merits of man with those of his Redeemer as the means of salvation.



The fall or division of Babylon appears to be the principal feature in the effects resulting from the action of the seventh vial upon the *air* ; so we suppose the last and perhaps the greatest error to which the disciple is liable, and perhaps, too, that into which the whole Christian world may most easily fall, is the attempt to mix the merits of man with those of his Saviour—to rely upon a righteousness partly of the Creator, and partly of the creature ; a mixture involved in the name of the great city *Babylon*, and a mixture especially represented by her cup of abominations, which we shall hereafter have occasion to notice.

So long as the disciple's *motive of conduct* is to mingle in the cup of salvation some holiness or goodness of his own, as forming a portion of his claim to eternal life, he cannot serve or worship God in the proper sense of the term ; for his motive must then be to serve himself, as much as if his salvation depended entirely upon it. The only difference between this *mixed motive*, and that which is professedly selfish, is, that there is an odious hypocrisy in one which is not to be found in the other. The disciple professes to have the glory of God only at heart, when it is really his own interest and his own glory that he is studying. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon, said Jesus ; no man can serve two masters ; so no one can at the same time act from a motive of serving God, and from a motive of serving himself. If the last motive come into consideration, the first is necessarily excluded. It is true that a dogma of the church, sanctioned perhaps for ages, *ex cathedra*, pronounces the chief end of man to be, “to glorify God and enjoy him for ever.” But it is plain that there are here two chief ends, instead of one. The only chief end of man must be *to glorify God* ; this is the only pure motive of conduct ; to be actuated by the motive of promoting one's own enjoyment is to act with the purpose of serving one's self, not God. Hence the necessity of an implicit reliance upon the divine purpose of *grace*, through the *imputed righteousness of Christ*, to enable the disciple to give himself entirely to the chief end of his being—that of glorifying his Creator and Redeemer—that of worshipping God *in spirit and in truth*. Man is required to love his neighbour as himself—it is permitted here, to divide the affections. But God is to be loved with the whole heart and mind and strength ; not even *self* is to come in *here* for a share of this love. The love of God must be the *only* motive of conduct, or God is not worshipped as his temple service requires ; and it is for this reason especially, we may say, that no mixed system of salvation is admissible, and that such mixture, however highly esteemed amongst men, is abomination in the sight of God.

“Whom the Lord loveth he rebuketh,” (Rev. iii. 19.) The admonitory instructions of this book are intended for those to whom they are addressed—disciples, not unbelievers,—the seven churches, the objects of the Saviour's peculiar care. It is for the disciple who believes himself most loved to lay

these admonitions most to heart ; to apply these tests to his own views, and to his own motives of conduct. So we may say of Christian communities : We are not to cast our eyes around the whole visible church, as it is termed, to apply the criterion of divine worship here given to the trial of portions of Christendom apparently least favoured of God, and most estranged from the truth ; we are to apply the standard of judgment to our own views, and the test of motives to that scheme of doctrine we are ourselves, as sects or denominations, most disposed to advocate.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## THE HARLOT IN THE WILDERNESS.—THE BEAST WITH SEVEN HEADS AND TEN HORNS.

Vs. 1, 2. And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters; with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

Καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς ἐκ τῶν ἐπτά ἀγγέλων τῶν ἔχόντων τὰς φιάλας, καὶ ἐλάλησε μετ' ἐμοῦ λέγων· δεῦρο, δεῖξω σοι τὸ κρῖμα τῆς πόρνης τῆς μεγάλης, τῆς καθημένης ἐπὶ τῶν ὑδάτων τῶν πολλῶν, μεθ' ἧς ἐπόρνευσαν οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς, καὶ ἐμεθύσθησαν οἱ κατοικοῦντες τὴν γῆν ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς.

§ 379. 'And there came one of the seven angels,' &c.—If this be the *first* (§ 145) of the seven angels, it must be the one the pouring out of whose vial resulted in a grievous sore upon the men having the mark of the beast; but perhaps either of these angels may be supposed, with equal propriety, to be instrumental in making the exhibition about to be described. The contents of this chapter, in its relation with the preceding portion of the Apocalypse, may be considered a species of episode; the attention of the reader or spectator being called off for a time from the thread of the main narrative to something requiring a separate illustration. On the effusion of the seventh vial, a dissolution of the great city took place, and Babylon came in remembrance before God. The questions naturally occurring then, we may suppose to have been, What great city is this? What was particularly the criminal character of this Babylon, for which she is made to partake of the cup of the wine of the fierceness of God's wrath? and, What is to be understood by her thus coming in remembrance before God? An answer to these inquiries is furnished in what we may here call *the vision of the harlot*.

'Come hither,' &c.—Comparing this passage with that of Rev. xxi. 9, 10, we cannot but be confirmed in the supposition already suggested, (§ 331,) that this HARLOT is an opposite of the *bride*, the Lamb's wife; as the great city Babylon is an opposite of the New Jerusalem. The contrast to be met with in the two figures will aid us in arriving at an understanding of the illustrations intended by both of them.



‘I will show unto thee the judgment,’ &c.—The whole process of apprehension, condemnation, and punishment, as appears from the context; the woman being first described in her power, as one exulting in the success of a life of crime; and the account ending with a description of her final destruction, as of the carrying into effect the sentence of execution.

With the Greek term *πόρνη*\* we are principally to associate the idea of adulteration or mixture; corresponding with which association, we consider this harlot (Babylon) as the figure of a mixed system of redemption—a supposed covenant of salvation, composed of a mixture of the principles of grace and those of works;—something involving, on the part of the disciple, a dependence partly upon his own merits and partly upon those of his Redeemer; this Greek term carrying with it the same signification as that conveyed by the name Babel or Babylon, (§ 331.) A harlot is the opposite of a wife. The wife of the Lamb we suppose to be the *covenant of grace*, or that plan of salvation by which the whole community of believers become the adopted children of God—consequently, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; on which account this economy or covenant (*Διαθήκη*) is also styled by Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, the *mother* of us all.

§ 380. The opposite of a plan of grace must be a plan of works; but as the Apocalypse is addressed to Christian churches, and as the errors to be eradicated by this development of the truth are errors in the church, and not out of it, we may reasonably conclude that the matter before us does not relate to the difference between Christians and Jews, or between the Christian economy and the Levitical economy. The plan represented by the harlot must be something introduced into the doctrinal views of Christians; and, as such, opposed to the economy of grace, it can be nothing else than a *mixed* system. We find the figure of a harlot to be almost uniformly employed in the Old Testament for the purpose of illustrating a like *dere*liction from the truth; a dereliction sometimes indeed compared to the conduct of a lawful wife in becoming an abandoned adulteress. The figure in either case is essentially different from that of the bondmaid or concubine, spoken of by Paul as the representation of the legal dispensation. The harlot of the Apocalypse represents, we think, a *perverted* view of the gospel plan of salvation; a view involving something like a mixture of Christianity and Judaism—a dependence partly upon the merits of Christ, and partly upon the merits or righteousness of man, (self.) The first part indeed being rather in profession than in reality, while the last part is less in profession and more in reality;—a dependence in any degree upon our own merits in the work of redemption, resulting, as we have repeatedly

\* Πορνεία proprie notat commixtionem eorum qui extra conjugium vivunt.—(Sueri Lex.) Vid. § 314, note.

remarked, in an assumption to ourselves of the glory of our own salvation ; thus constituting in effect a *forsaking* of Christ as the Lord our righteousness, and our only source of dependence.

This error is figuratively spoken of as the *great* harlot, because it is the great, the almost universal error of the Christian church ; an error confined to no sect or denomination—an error to be found rather in the hearts or minds of disciples, than in their modes of worship or in their formularies of doctrine.

§ 381. ‘That sitteth upon many waters.’—This figure, a license of *vision*, would be hardly admissible, were it not that, in the language of this Apocalypse, the great city and the harlot, as well as their opposites, the holy city and the bride, are employed almost as convertible terms ; perhaps for the reason that we should be continually reminded of the identity of the subject alluded to under these different appellations ; although probably for the further reason, that these changes and interchanges of figures greatly facilitate the illustrations intended.

Waters, as we have frequently noticed, (§ 200,) are figures of means of propitiation. The waters of the earth are opposites of *the* water of life, (the atonement of Christ ;) the multitude of means of atonement of man’s device being spoken of as *many* waters—many supposed means, or meritorious acts of propitiation, as they are erroneously estimated. On these many propitiatory devices, (waters,) the mixed system of salvation represented by the harlot rests, as upon its only foundation ; the system deriving its influence upon the minds of men, from the efficacy of these supposed means of redemption ;—these pseudo-elements of atonement furnishing the harlot system with its *cathedra*, or seat of authority, whence its doctrinal propositions may be said to emanate.

Changing the figure, these waters are to Babylon a substitute for the rock or mountain, (Zion,) upon which the holy city may be considered as resting. This harlot city accordingly rests upon something even more unstable, and less to be depended upon, than a foundation of sand. Corresponding with this precarious support, the prophet speaks of Babylon as approaching the time of her dissolution, (Jer. li. 13 :) “O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come.” The ancient Babylon—the city—was not built amongst many waters, as might be said to be the case with some of our modern cities ; but no doubt it owed as much to the labour of man for its artificial waters, (the Euphrates, by means of irrigation perhaps, supplying the whole city,) as it was indebted to the same labour of man for its immense bulwarks and hanging gardens. In this respect, the figure of such a city is particularly pertinent to the apocalyptic subject of illustration here contemplated. The dominion of Babylon, however, as an empire, extended over many well-watered countries ; and rivers

and streams are essential means of dependence to the subjects of an empire, both for purposes of life, and for the acquisition of wealth. Babylon in that respect, in the time of the prophet, may correctly be spoken of as dwelling upon many waters. At the same time, the similarity of these typical expressions suggests the probability that the apostle and the prophet had the same Babylon in view; both employ the same ancient city as a figure, and probably both, directed by the same spirit of revelation, intend to illustrate ultimately the same spiritual truths.

It may be objected, that the definition of these waters, given by the angel in the fifteenth verse of this chapter, is expressly that they are “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues;” but this we have already seen to be a figurative expression for what we term earthly powers of salvation, or supposed means of salvation, peculiar to the earthly system, (§ 80;) the very redundancy of the expression itself indicating to us that it is not to be taken in a literal sense. Besides, the interpretation here, as elsewhere, is what we term *an interpretation in a vision*; the language is part of the vision—the interpretation is as figurative as the thing interpreted. The apostle is told that these *waters* are peoples, multitudes, &c.; we must then go to other parts of the Apocalypse to learn how this expression (peoples, multitudes, &c.) is employed, and thence derive our understanding of the interpretation given.

§ 382. ‘With whom the kings of the earth,’ &c.—These kings are no doubt those summoned by the three unclean spirits (Rev. xvi. 14) to the battle of the great day—the kings that hid themselves in the dens and rocks of the mountains, Rev. vi. 15. We suppose them here, as we have supposed them before, to represent ruling principles of subordinate earthly systems; systems founded upon the *position* of man’s dependence upon his own works for eternal life. The ruling principles of these systems may, perhaps, be susceptible of employment in the cause of truth or error; as Christ is said, Rev. i. 5, to be the Prince of the kings of the earth;—all principles and all systems, whether true or false, being subordinate in effect to the grand design of an eventual manifestation of the truth. But these kings of the earth, we presume, are to be considered as altogether engaged in the service of the false system of the harlot; they have become amalgamated and identified with that system, and are consequently, like that system, destined for destruction;—such destruction being implied, apparently, in the results of the great battle described at the conclusion of the nineteenth chapter. The kings of the earth indeed are mentioned, Rev. xxi. 24, as bringing their glory and honour into the holy city; but this is subsequent to the passing away of the first earth, as well as the first heaven; consequently, these latter kings are those of the new earth—ruling principles of systems, depending upon the new position of salvation by grace alone.



‘And the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk,’ &c.—The inhabitants, οἱ κατοικοῦντες τὴν γῆν—those against whom the three woes were denounced, (Rev. viii. 13;) the dwellers upon the earth, whose names are not written in the book of life, as explained in the eighth verse of this chapter; those that are to be tried in the *hour of trial*, mentioned Rev. iii. 10; those upon whom the blood of the souls under the altar was to be avenged, (Rev. vi. 10;) those that were tormented by the two witnesses or prophets, and rejoiced over their dead bodies, (Rev. xi. 10;) those against whom the accuser came down, (Rev. xii. 12;) those that worshipped the beast, and that were deluded by the false prophet into making an image to the beast, (Rev. xiii. 12 and 14;) those *concerning* whom the everlasting gospel was to be preached, (Rev. xiv. 6;) and finally, those constituting the host of the defeated armies whose flesh was given to the fowls, (Rev. xix. 21.) These apocalyptic inhabitants of the earth, we suppose, like the kings reigning over them, to be principles or elements of the earthly system; all destined to destruction either prior to, or simultaneously with, the passing away of the first earth. We suppose, also, these inhabitants of the earth to be identic with the men not having the seal of God in their foreheads, (Rev. ix. 4, 10;) the men *sealed* representing elements taken out of the mass of earthly principles. So when it is said, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them,” we are to notice that this, as in the case of the kings, is subsequent to the passing away of the old earth. These men are the men of the new earth, or the sealed ones of the old earth transferred to a true position; corresponding with the change experienced by those “who came out of great tribulation;” and of whom it is said, he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them, (Rev. vii. 14, 15.)

The term *inhabiters* of the earth, or *dwellers upon the earth*, or they that dwell upon the earth, does not occur in the Apocalypse subsequent to the close of this chapter; which confirms us in the supposition that this class of elements is supposed to be involved in the destruction of Babylon, or in that of the great battle before alluded to. The sealed ones *taken from among men*, are not termed *dwellers upon* or *inhabiters of the earth*, because they are in the light of those who have *here* no continuing city: they are strangers and pilgrims; they may be *men*, but they do not depend upon the earth for a dwelling or a tabernacle, or a shelter from the wrath to come.

These inhabitants of the earth are spoken of as having been made *drunk* with the wine of the harlot; or rather, as it should be expressed, having become drunken, (*inebriati sunt*, Leusden and Beza.) The term does not necessarily imply a state of insensibility; it signifies either extreme satiety, or that state of intoxication which may be said to be akin to insanity. The intoxicated individual, unable to distinguish between a friend or foe, attacks

with equal hostility every object coming in his way ; so these principles of the earthly system, under the influence of the wine of the harlot, become elements of destruction or perversion to all connected with them.

The wine possessing this intoxicating quality, we have already supposed to be the opposite of the wine of the marriage feast, (§ 332)—the good wine reserved for the last manifestation—the *new* wine to be participated in by the followers of Jesus in his Father's kingdom ; not new as compared with old, which is said to be better, (Luke v. 39,) but wine of a *new kind*—the water of purification (the atonement of Jesus) becoming the element of eternal enjoyment, making glad the heart of man throughout eternity, (Ps. civ. 15.) The wine of the harlot's fornication, on the contrary, we suppose to represent a false means of atonement ; a mixture, a propitiation, partly of the atonement of Christ, and partly of some supposed propitiatory acts or qualities of the disciple. The elements of the earthly system, influenced by these mixed views in relation to the doctrine of atonement, are like men bereft of reason ; or, if we confine our notion of this drunkenness to extreme *satiety*, we may say these elements are so overcharged with the false views of atonement in contemplation, that it is not possible for them to admit any portion of the peculiar truths pertaining to this subject.

Drunkenness deludes the unhappy victim into a persuasion that he is pursuing a course of enjoyment, when he is actually destroying himself ; so the false economy of salvation proffers a pretended means of atonement, promising eternal happiness, by which those adopting them fall into the dangerous error thus depicted ; as it is said, Is. xxviii. 7, “ But they also have erred through wine and strong drink ; they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink ; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.” A similar allusion may be contemplated in what is said of the drunkards of Ephraim, Is. xxviii. 1–4, and other like passages of the prophets.

V. 3. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness ; and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

Καὶ ἀπήρεγκέ με εἰς ἔρημον ἐν πνεύματι· καὶ εἶδον γυναῖκα καθήμενην ἐπὶ θηρίον κόκκινον, γέμον ὀνομάτων βλασφημίας, ἔχον κεφαλὰς ἑπτὰ καὶ κέρατα δέκα.

§ 383. ‘ So he carried me away in the spirit ;’ or, according to the Greek, *in spirit* ; enabling the apostle to see the thing represented in its proper spiritual sense, (§ 24.)

‘ Into the wilderness.’—The apostle was not literally taken into a wilderness, but in a spiritual sense he occupied a position analogous to that of being in a wilderness. It is only in such a spiritual wilderness that the system represented by the harlot can be seen or can appear in its full power.

A wilderness is the opposite of a city ; it is a place without enclosures,

without walls or defences, without dwelling-places or shelters, and where there is at least a sparsity of the means of subsistence. A desert of this kind represents a position devoid of any means of salvation. To be out of Christ, is to be in a wilderness; but all who are out of Christ do not perceive themselves to be in this position. The subjects of the harlot are not supposed to be aware that they are in a wilderness; they fancy themselves in a position of security, abundantly provided even for eternity. The eyes of the apostle were opened; he perceived the real character of the position into which as a spectator he was introduced.

‘And I saw a woman.’—This is the first distinct mention we have of a woman of a different character, and in different circumstances from those of the woman seen in heaven, (Rev. xii. 1,) unless we go back to what is said of Jezebel, Rev. ii. 20. The position of this woman in a wilderness is certainly an opposite to that of the woman in heaven; and if we suppose this woman to represent a *pseudo-covenant*, or a dispensation the opposite of the economy of grace, we may consider her also in the light of a false prophetess, or a false interpretation of the divine will, (§ 69,) nearly identic with *that woman Jezebel*.

‘Sitting upon a scarlet-coloured beast.’—This also may be contemplated as the opposite of “a woman clothed with the sun,” or having a position in the sun, resplendent with the rays of that dispenser of light. The colour of this beast we may take to represent that of blood: it is not the *fiery red* of the accuser, indicative of his trying as well as of his vindictive qualities, but it is the colour of the element representing the penalty of sin, and symbolizing a power derived from the continued action of the law. There is nothing said here of the spotted appearance of the leopard, or of the mouth of the lion, or of the feet of the bear; but as this beast is represented to be full of the names of blasphemy, and to have seven heads and ten horns, like the beast seen rising from the sea, we suppose the two animals to be identic; certain characteristics only appearing more prominently on one occasion than on the other. The scarlet colour of the beast here, however, may be a figure equivalent to that of his appearing to rise from the sea, (the element of wrath,) when before seen;—so, *full of the names of blasphemy*, cannot be otherwise than equivalent to having the name of *blasphemy* upon his seven heads. Being the same beast, we are of course to understand that he possesses the power, seat, and great authority of the dragon or accuser; the power of the beast depending upon that of the accuser, and the weapons of both consisting in the requisitions of the law, (their ten horns,) or rather in the power of the law as a whole; corresponding with the analysis we have already suggested of these heads and horns, (§ 294.)

The position of the woman *sitting on the beast*, we suppose to be figurative of the dependence of the false economy, of which she is a figure, upon



the blasphemous element of *self*, with its peculiar attributes. The woman depending upon the beast, and not the beast upon the woman, as in the order of the Apocalypse, we find her the first to be destroyed.

We have already (§ 277) noticed the peculiarity, that the woman bearing the man-child fled to the wilderness where the harlot was in full power, and have adverted to the difference in the circumstances of these symbolical females: the one being in the wilderness in a state of seclusion; the other in the pride of her vainglory, arrayed in all the trappings of royalty, and sustained by the imposing appearance of an extraordinary power.

It is in a wilderness that the authority of the accuser may be said to be undisputed, as it was in a wilderness that *Sinai* might be said to have reigned alone. It is in the wilderness that a semi-legal system of self-righteousness appears to be the great power of God. At the same time, it is in a spiritual wilderness that the disciple, when his eyes are opened to a view of his state of destitution by nature, is led to feel his need of divine mercy, and is constrained to accept the gracious provision offered him by the gospel. So it was in the wilderness that even the wayward children of Israel were constrained to cry unto the Lord for the supplies indispensable to the preservation of life. It was in the desert in their distress that he gave them water from the rock, and the bread of heaven; and this even when their own grovelling inclinations prompted them to prefer the flesh-pots of Egypt. It was in the wilderness that fiery serpents had power to torture and to destroy them; but it was also in the same wilderness that the healing power—the symbol of the Saviour—was lifted up, that all who looked to it might be saved. The same wilderness, therefore, in which the power of the accuser appears undisputed, in which the unclean element of self may for a time appear exalted, and in which the false covenant or economy appears to be sustained by all the power of the law, is eventually the means of bringing the disciple to a knowledge of the rich inheritance provided in the merits of Christ. So the barren desert of Sinai was to the Israelite the way to the *land of promise*.

Vs. 4, 5. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet-colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead (was) a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

Καὶ ἡ γυνὴ ἦν περιβεβλημένη πορφυροῦν καὶ κόκκινον καὶ κεχρυσωμένη χρυσίῳ καὶ λίθῳ τιμίῳ καὶ μωργαρίταις, ἔχουσα ποτήριον χρυσοῦν ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτῆς γέμον βδελυγμάτων, καὶ τὰ ὀνόματα τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ μέτωπον αὐτῆς ὄνομα γεγραμμένον· μυστήριον· Βαβυλὼν ἡ μεγάλη, ἡ μήτηρ τῶν πόρνων καὶ τῶν βδελυγμάτων τῆς γῆς.

§ 384. ‘And the woman was arrayed,’ &c.—Purple has been almost in all ages a colour peculiarly appropriate to the exhibition of regal or imperial

power. The kings of Midian in the time of Gideon wore a raiment of *purple*, (Judges viii. 26.)—Jesus was clothed in a *purple* robe, in mockery of what was supposed to be his pretensions to an earthly sovereignty ; and to take the *purple* has been in later times a common expression for the assumption of supreme political power. The scarlet colour of this woman's array (crimson, κόκκινος) is the same as the colour of the beast ; its figurative indication being probably also the same. The despotic as well as the sanguinary character of the system represented by the woman are thus symbolized by these elements of her dress—a dress furnishing a striking contrast to the fine linen, clean and white, of the wife of the Lamb, (Rev. xix. 8,) and directing our attention to the opposite means of salvation, or to the opposite righteousnesses of the two economies thus illustrated. It is also worthy of remark that the colours of this woman's dress very nearly correspond with those of the *ten* curtains of the tabernacle in the wilderness, (Ex. xxvi. 1,) *blue* and *purple* and *scarlet* ; all of them corresponding with different appearances of the blood, as it shows itself in the veins and arteries of the living human subject ; indicating that, as under the legal dispensation there was no purification without blood, so the shelter or tabernacle of the first covenant was one in its nature exacting something equal to the forfeiture of the eternal life of the transgressor. This seems sufficient to point out the legal tendency of the system of Babylon ; although, it is true, a clothing of purple and scarlet may be taken merely as a figure of earthly *wealth*, or of the ostentatious display of self-dependence ; as it was said of certain idols, Jer. x. 9, “blue and purple is their clothing,” or of the rich man, whose *position* furnishes so striking a contrast to that of the beggar laid at his gate, that he “was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day.”

‘And decked with gold and precious stones and pearls.’—It is said immediately in connection with the predicted destruction of the *earthly system*, Is. xiii. 12, “I will make a man more precious than fine gold ; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.” In allusion to which, it is also said of Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 7, “To you therefore that believe, he is *precious*.” To be in Christ, enjoying the attribute of his righteousness, is to be in the *truth*, (John xvii. 23 ;) and thus to be in him is to be decked indeed with *fine and pure gold*. This gold of the harlot, however, is of a different material : it is what she claims to be *her* gold—it is neither pure, nor fine, nor tried in the fire. It is like the metallic representative of wealth of the rich men spoken of by the apostle James, which he denominates *their* gold and *their* silver. So we may say of these precious stones and pearls of the harlot, they are *her* gems and *her* pearls : far different in their real value from the one stone spoken of as elect, precious, 1 Pet. ii. 6; and the pearl of great price—the true ransom of the soul, (the atonement of Jesus,) for which the disciple is ready to give up every claim of merit of his own.

Babylon, no doubt, boasts of her riches—she makes a great display of her resources ; for, according to the prophet, she is to be as much characterized for her pride as for her apparent wealth, (Jer. l. 31.) The merits and means of propitiation of human fabric are the uncertain riches (1 Tim. vi. 17) which not only take to themselves wings and fly away, but which must be found to be entirely worthless in the emergency when something really *precious* will be most called for.

§ 385. ‘ Having a golden cup in her hand.’—As we have taken gold to be symbolical of truth, it may appear hardly in keeping with our view of the character of Babylon as a false system, that the material of her cup should be *gold*. This however may be construed in two ways. She was decked in *gold*, that is, in *her gold*, (gold at the best very much alloyed or mixed,) and the material of her cup may be of the same debased character ; or, if it be of *pure* gold, then it represents an instrument of truth, or a true exhibition showing the true character of the mixture in which her followers participate. We prefer this latter construction, although the result would not materially differ in either case.\*

‘ Full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.’—Such is the real character of this mixture when truly exhibited. We are not to suppose the participants of this cup to be aware of its true character, any more than they are aware that the magnificent city Babylon, as they esteem it, is but a wilderness, or the *capital* of a wilderness. As we have considered the wine of the harlot an opposite of the wine of the marriage feast, we may also consider her cup a professed substitute, or a counterfeit, of the cup of salvation alluded to Ps. cxvi. 3. Babylon professes to furnish by her cup an element of joy and rejoicing, an atonement or propitiation essential to the enjoyment of eternal life. The most odious characteristic of the ingredients of this cup is, apparently, that it is a *mixture*, as indicated by the epithets applied to it ; a mixture corresponding with what we have said (§ 33) of the character of the system represented by Babylon herself. This cup offers to the disciple, as an object of his faith and trust, a pretended atonement or propitiation,

\* There would be no inconsistency in supposing the harlot to appear with ornaments of pure gold, and of gems and pearls, really precious ; for it accords with our common experience of falsehood, that it usually makes its appearance “ in truth’s array.” In like manner, our supposed pseudo-economy of salvation, besides arraying herself in the sanguinary apparel of the legal covenant, may, in perfect keeping with her mixed character, make a display also of many of the precious truths of the gospel economy ; the character of these valuable materials being changed only by the abuse to which they are perverted : as it is said, Lam. iv. 1, 2, “ How is the gold become dim ! how is the most fine gold changed ! the stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street. The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter !”



wrought out partly by the merits of Christ, and partly by the merits of man. Such a mixture involves the ingredients of hypocrisy, of blasphemy, of vain-glory, of mercenary and selfish motives, of ingratitude towards the author of salvation, and of lukewarmness in his service ;—*hypocrisy*, because it professes a dependence upon the merits of Christ, when the real dependence of the deluded disciple is upon his own merits, and because it professes to give the glory of salvation to the Saviour, when it really assumes this glory for some merit of the being saved ; *blasphemy*, because, if man be supposed to be in any respect the efficient cause of his own salvation, such a supposition places him, in pretence, upon an equality with God ; *vainglory*, because, if the disciple trace his eternal well-being to some merit in himself, he assumes for himself the glory of his own salvation ; *mercenary selfishness*, because on these mixed principles man must necessarily act from the secret motive of promoting his own interest, and his own glory, while the pretension that eternal life is a compensation for merited service, in any degree, must as necessarily diminish the *gratitude* due for that which is an unmerited *gift*, and must thus generate the *lukewarmness* so hateful to God, as we have seen it declared to be in the case of the Laodicean angel, (§ 102.) The ingredients of such a mixture may well be supposed to be *abominations* in the sight of Him, who has declared himself the *only* Saviour ; who will not divide his glory with another ; a jealous God, beside whom no other object of worship or other source of dependence is permitted.

The word rendered *filthiness* in our common version, ἀκαθάρτης according to some editions of the Greek, does not occur in any other passage of the New Testament ; but its kindred, ἀκαθαρσία, and the adjective ἀκάθαρτος, are met with several times, and are uniformly rendered by the words *uncleanness* and *unclean*, as the three spirits were said, Rev. xvi. 13, to be *unclean as frogs* ; an *uncleanness*, as we have supposed, of a Levitical character—the opposite of that which is *holy* or *set apart*. We suppose the second ingredient of the harlot's cup to be a principle or principles of this unholy character : common or unclean, because not *set apart* to the service of God—elements of propitiation not of the class required by God ; such *uncleanness* in matters of doctrine being apparently alluded to, Eph. iv. 19, and 1 Thess. ii. 3. Purity, however, being the opposite of mixture, as fornication is the opposite of marriage, this *uncleanness* may involve also the same idea of mixed principles, partly of self-dependence and partly of dependence upon God, as those alluded to under the figure of abominations ; as a reliance partly on one's own righteousness and partly on the righteousness of Christ, is figuratively spoken of as an adulterous infidelity or breach of marriage vows.

The cup or the wine of a marriage feast represents in Scripture the occasion of joy or happiness afforded by the marriage, not merely to the parties united in wedlock, but to all the guests present at the feast. To

participate in the wine of the marriage entertainment, is to share in the common joy and common cause of rejoicing of the whole company. The figure appears to be taken from the presumed interest which every friend or relative of the parties thus united takes in the prospect of their happiness, resulting as it does from a legitimate and honourable connection. The cup or wine of the harlot represents an occasion of false, ill-founded joy or rejoicing; as if we were to imagine the friends of a bride called together to celebrate, as they supposed, her nuptials, which proved to be only of a fictitious character, resulting in an illicit connection. The joy of these relatives would appear, to one aware of the deceit, a species of *madness*. In like manner, the followers of the harlot are led away with the insane delusion that her festal cup represents a real occasion of rejoicing; while, to those who are aware of its fallacious character, the conduct of these devotees appears to be equalled only by the folly of the *maniac*. Something like this seems to be implied in the language of the prophet, "Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken; the nations have drunken of her wine, therefore the nations are *mad*," Jer. li. 7;—they have been deceived into the belief that the illicit connections peculiar to the system of Babylon, affords that cause of rejoicing which can result only from the occasion of the legitimate union of the divine Spouse with his spiritual bride.

§ 386. 'And upon her forehead a name,' &c.—The elements of truth, the sealed ones, bore upon their foreheads the name of the Father of the Lamb. The subjects of the beast were required to receive his mark in their foreheads, and, corresponding with these, the harlot is conspicuously marked with her name and character. The impress, however, we may presume is only to be seen by one who, like the apostle, in spirit sees her in her true character and position. Her deluded followers, of course, are not supposed to possess this degree of discernment. To the apostle she may be said to appear unveiled; by him, therefore, the inscription upon her forehead is plainly perceived, but to those partaking of her cup, she may appear as the espoused wife—the false economy usurping the place of the true, as the blasphemous beast usurps the place of the true God.

'Mystery.'—We have already spoken of the mystery of truth, the mystery of God, of Christ, and of the Gospel, (§ 331.) Here, it is evident that there must be something of an opposite character. The gospel is termed, Rom. xvi. 25, "The revelation of the mystery of God, which was kept secret since the world began;" that is, the revelation of God's plan of salvation. Opposite of this, we suppose the harlot to represent a mystery or plan of salvation of human device—a *simulation* of the plan revealed by the gospel—a simulation of that union represented by the marriage tie, which Paul denominates a great mystery—an opposite of the covenant declared, Gal. iv. 26, to be "the mother of us all," or rather a substitute for it; for

we do not suppose Babylon to represent the covenant of works—which is something of an unmixed character. We suppose the harlot to be rather *professedly* a representation of the covenant of grace, but in reality a confused mixture of the principles of both covenants. She does not profess to advocate a system of doctrine in which no salvation is esteemed necessary; she pretends, on the contrary, to furnish a cup of salvation of her own. And as the gospel mystery has its cup of propitiation, (the atonement of Christ,) so the harlot has her professed means of atonement, a mixture such as we have before noticed; the mystery of the harlot bearing to the beast (self) a relation corresponding with that borne by the bride, or true covenant of grace, to the Redeemer—Babylon being perhaps a figure of the mystery of iniquity, alluded to by the apostle Paul in his account of the man of sin, 2 Thess. ii. 3. The mystery of iniquity is not the man of sin himself, but the two are so intimately connected, in their principles and results, that they may be contemplated as identic. As, on the other hand, the bride (the covenant of grace, or the purpose of God) is in effect so much the same with the Lamb, Christ, (the personification of the *Logos*,) that they also, when fully revealed, will be manifested to be identic.

‘Babylon the great.’—We have already enlarged so fully upon the system of confusion designated by this appellation, that a further analysis of it here would be but a repetition. The principal use to be made of this inscription at present is to identify expressly these two figures of the woman and the city, that there may be no hesitation in receiving whatever is affirmed of the one as equally applicable to the other: this harlot, the great city, and Babylon, represent but one and the same mystery; as we shall find their opposites, the bride, the holy city, and the New Jerusalem, alike representing one other mystery. The explanation may be the more called for here, as, while Babylon is described in this chapter as existing, and as being finally destroyed under the figure of a woman, her destruction in the next chapter is more circumstantially set forth as the conflagration of a great city.

‘The mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.’—As any confused system of true and false principles must necessarily generate a multitude of subordinate errors, so Babylon, as a mixture of the elements of the law with those of the gospel, is the parent of a multitude of minor doctrinal systems and elements of the same erroneous character. All such adulterations of truth are alike offensive and abominable in the sight of God; all possessing the same features of hypocrisy, vainglory, ingratitude, lukewarmness, and blasphemy; for which reason they are entitled to the appellation of *abominations*, abominations of the *earth*, because they are peculiar to that earthly view of man’s position which supposes him to be dependent upon his own merits or works. All these minor systems, with their variety



of forms and phases, may be contemplated as inventions of the false prophet for sustaining the power of self, and for promoting the worship of that image of self, or of self-righteousness, which comes into immediate collision with the only true object of worship, Jehovah our Redeemer. They owe their origin, however, *mediately* to that mixture or amalgamation, of which Babylon is the representation. The inscription upon the forehead of this adulterous woman might accordingly be translated thus: *Mystery, the system of confusion; the parent of mixed systems, and of self-righteous schemes of salvation, arising from carnal and perverted interpretations of the revealed word of God.*

Vs. 6, 7. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads, and ten horns.

Καὶ εἶδον τὴν γυναικα μεθύουσαν ἐκ τοῦ αἵματος τῶν ἁγίων καὶ ἐκ τοῦ αἵματος τῶν μαρτύρων Ἰησοῦ· καὶ ἐθαύμασα, ἰδὼν αὐτήν, θαῦμα μέγα. Καὶ εἶπέ μοι ὁ ἄγγελος· διὰ τί ἐθαύμασας; ἐγὼ σοι ἐρῶ τὸ μυστήριον τῆς γυναικὸς καὶ τοῦ θηρίου τοῦ βαστάζοντος αὐτήν, τοῦ ἔχοντος τὰς ἐπτὰ κεφαλὰς καὶ τὰ δέκα κέρατα.

§ 387. ‘And I saw,’ &c.—The idea to be associated with this drunkenness we suppose to be more especially that of *satiety*; as, in speaking of a ferocious animal, it might be said to be satiated, gorged with the blood of its victims. The figure corresponds with what is said of certain elements, represented as inhabitants of the earth in the last chapter, which are said to have shed the blood of saints and *of prophets*, on which account blood was given them to drink. The triumphant condition of the harlot precedes the pouring out of these vials of wrath; the elements of her system being probably the same, or part of the same, as those said to be worthy of the visitation of the third vial, (Rev. xvi. 6.)

These saints (holy ones) and martyrs (witnesses) of Jesus we have before supposed (§§ 162, 262) to represent elements of revealed truth as transmitted to us in the sacred Scriptures, all witnessing to the true character of Jesus, as the Lord our righteousness, and to the nature of his work in the economy of grace, when their spiritual sense is correctly taken into consideration. On this account, to maintain the system of the harlot, it is necessary to divest these elements of revelation of their spiritual sense; this separation of the spirit from the letter is, therefore, figuratively spoken of as a shedding of the blood, or a taking of the life of those who are witnesses of the truth. This the harlot system is supposed to have done to satiety, so as apparently to have completely triumphed, and to have done so with impunity.

‘And when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration,’ (wonder.)—This expression appears designed to bring out the explanation of the angel immediately following it; but the wonder will appear the more natural, if

we bear in mind that the apostle at present sees the harlot only in her glory and power, rioting in the midst of the exercise of her cruelty and oppression. As yet, he knows nothing of her *end*; that she should be permitted thus to triumph, appears to him, therefore, a *mystery*—something indeed wonderful. The feelings of the apostle may be compared here with those of the Psalmist when he saw the prosperity of the wicked, and before he understood *their end*, (Ps. lxxiii. 4–17.)

‘And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel?’—As if appealing to the knowledge which the apostle must have had of the dealings of God, in permitting the temporary prosperity of the wicked, the angel reminded him that he should have perceived this short-lived triumph of the harlot to be designed for some peculiar exhibition of the power and providence of the Most High.

‘I will tell thee the *mystery* of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her.’—I will tell the end, the purpose for which this wickedness is permitted. As the woman was drunken with the blood of saints and martyrs, and as the beast carried or sustained her, the conduct of both constitutes one and the same mystery; so in the sequel we find the woman destroyed by the horns of the animal, upon which she had depended for support.

‘Which hath the seven heads, and ten horns.’—This repetition of the description just before given of the beast, would appear hardly necessary were it not designed to fix our attention to the fact, that this monster is the same as that seen rising from the sea, (Rev. xiii. 1,) whose peculiar characteristics we have already analyzed, (§ 294.)

V. 8. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, (whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world,) when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

Τὸ θηρίον, ὃ εἶδες, ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἔστι, καὶ μέλλει ἀναβαίνειν ἐκ τῆς ἀβύσσου καὶ εἰς ἀπώλειαν ὑπάγειν· καὶ θαυμάσουσι οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ὧν οὐ γέγραπται τὰ ὀνόματα ἐπὶ τὸ βιβλίον τῆς ζωῆς ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, βλέπόντων τὸ θηρίον, ὅτι ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἔστι, καὶ παρῆσται.

§ 388. ‘The beast that thou sawest,’ &c.—The explanation of the mystery of the woman is here preceded by an account of the beast, which occupies the principal part of the remainder of the chapter.

We are not obliged to suppose that the beast was to be annihilated, and afterwards created a second time. The language of the angel is apocalyptic, and is to be taken in that qualified sense. A thing *is* when it is revealed or manifested: it *is not* when it is not revealed or manifested; it *will be* when it is again manifested.

We have supposed this beast to be the principle or element of *self*;—something in the heart of man pretending to an independence of God, (§

301,) and even assuming the position of God as the author and efficient cause of eternal life.

This blasphemous principle (self) was manifest under the legal economy. It then ruled with undisputed sway, for the law was supposed to recognize no fulfilment of its requisitions, except by the works or righteousness of man: the beast then *was*. No sooner, however, is the gospel introduced, than the principle of self is banished. Christ having fulfilled the law and satisfied its demands, he alone appears, as he is, the efficient cause of salvation: the creature (man) in this work is nothing—the beast then *is not*. Again, the language of revelation is misconstrued; some of the leading doctrines of the gospel are perverted; the economy of grace is represented as a *mixture*; salvation no longer appears a free gift; the sinner is supposed to have been redeemed on account of something meritorious in himself; he claims now to be the efficient cause of his own eternal happiness; he forms in his own mind an image of his fancied righteousness; he adores the image of himself; he builds his hope upon the baseless system of salvation by human merits. The beast is now seen to ascend, as it were, out of the bottomless pit, (§ 206.)

These different processes of manifestation may take place in some sense in different ages of the visible church, or they may at times be more plainly discernible in some portions of Christendom than in others; but we think the declaration of the mighty angel, (Rev. x. 7,) *there shall be time no longer*, is to be applied here as elsewhere, (§ 230;) the changes in contemplation being of a nature to take place in the mental experience—the doctrinal views—of Christian disciples of all ages and of all denominations, the reign of the beast representing the ascendancy of a certain principle of error opposed to the element of sovereign grace.

‘And they that dwell upon the earth shall wonder,’ &c.—As if it had been said, in allusion to the astonishment of the apostle, ‘It is not for you to wonder even at this extraordinary power and prosperity of the wicked, for by you the *end* should be considered; but there is room for those that *dwell upon the earth* to wonder, as with great fear, when they see the downfall and final perdition of this impostor, or element of imposition, to which they have been accustomed to look as to the great power of God;’ the word rendered *wonder* expressing the kind of amazement felt by an ignorant multitude in beholding some extraordinary celestial phenomenon, prodigy, or portentous omen. These dwellers upon the earth, with a certain exception, we have uniformly considered principles of the earthly system personified, those especially subject to the influence of the beast, and made drunk with the wine of the harlot. This is the last passage in which the appellation occurs; and we may suppose this predicted wonder or amazement to be



indicative of the approaching end of those by whom it is experienced—an end perhaps simultaneous with that of the beast, (Rev. xix. 20, 21.)

‘When they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.’—We think the wonder here spoken of is applicable rather to the sight of the perdition of the beast than to the sight of the beast itself. It is said, in the first description of this extraordinary animal, that all the world *wondered* after the beast. The wonder then was in beholding his power and exaltation; it is now to be in seeing his downfall. There is, however, some difference in both the Greek and English editions in the words here given, which it appears necessary to notice.

§ 389. According to some, the reading of the last words, rendered *and yet is* in our common version, should be *καὶ πάλιν ἔστιν*; according to others, *καὶ παρῆσται*. The English editions of Wiclif, Tyndale, Cranmer, and Reines, omit the expression altogether: *ὅτι* also may be rendered *that* or *because*, although it is sometimes put for *ὅτε*, *when*. The reading of Wiclif is, “and men dwellinge in erthe schulu wonder, seyinge the beest that was is not.” In one case the wonder is in seeing the beast; in the other, in seeing that, although he was, he no longer is; while in another, as in our common version, the greatest wonder would seem to be that, although *he is not*, yet *he is*;—a contradiction apparently in terms.

If *παρῆσται*, however, be the correct reading, as the latest editions represent it to be, and if, as we suppose, this word be from *πάρεμι*, a compound of *παρά* and *εἰμί*, as *ἔσται* is the third person of the future tense of *εἰμί*, and not of the present, the compound *παρῆσται* must signify *will be*, and not *is*. The sentence will then read, “shall wonder when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and *will be* ;” corresponding with what is said of the monster in the first part of the verse, that he *shall* ascend, or is to ascend (*μελλει ἀναβαίνειν*) from the abyss. This reading appears preferable, as it does not involve even an apparent contradiction in terms, while it does not militate with a fair construction of the subsequent verse.

If we prefer rendering the last clause according to our common version, the result cannot vary materially upon a fair construction of it. The beast that was, and is not, and yet is, must be that which *is not* apparently, and yet *is* in reality. As the verb *πάρεμι* is used, John xi. 28, “The Master *is come*, (*παρῆστι*, is present,) and calleth for thee;” that is, he is *hard by*, although not seen; so the experience of every one may convince him that the principle of self or selfishness operates within him, although its existence is not recognized by him.

The apostle seems to have been told here of something already seen by him; that is, the ascending of the beast from the abyss. But he was not then acquainted with the peculiarity, that prior to the coming of the beast

from the sea he had existed, and had been in full power ; this power having been subsequently taken from him ; and his rising from the sea, Rev. xiii., being his second appearance, equivalent to his ascending from the bottomless pit. The present narration of the angel going back to the commencement of the history of the beast, in order that the mystery of both beast and woman may be the better explained.

Vs. 9, 10, 11. And here (is) the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings : five are fallen, and one is, (and) the other is not yet come ; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

Ἦν δὲ ὁ νοῦς ὁ ἔχων σοφίαν· αἱ ἐπὶ κεφαλῇ ἐπὶ ὄρη εἰσὶν, ὅπου ἡ γυνὴ κάθηται ἐπ' αὐτῶν. Καὶ βασιλεῖς ἐπὶ αὐτῶν· οἱ πέντε ἔπεσαν, ὁ εἷς ἐστίν, ὁ ἄλλος οὐκ ἔλθει, καὶ ὅταν ἔλθῃ, ὀλίγον αὐτὸν δεῖ μένειν. Καὶ τὸ θηρίον, ὃ ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἔστι, καὶ αὐτὸς ὄγδοός ἐστι, καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἐπὶ ἐστίν, καὶ εἰς ἀπόλειαν ὑπάγει.

§ 390, ‘Here is the mind which hath wisdom ;’ or, here the understanding having wisdom—*Hic sensus habens sapientiam*, (G. & L.)—an intimation of the peculiarly mystic *sense* of the explanation about to be given ; for as there is no conjunction in the original corresponding with *and* at the commencement of the verse in our common version, the sentence seems to be set off from the preceding matter, and to apply more particularly to what follows. The angel is about to interpret the meaning of the seven heads and ten horns of the beast, and the notice is necessary to remind the hearer that the interpretation itself is something to be also interpreted. The intimation is of the same character as that we have attributed to the words, He that hath ears to hear, &c. Here is matter for the understanding of those who possess the hidden wisdom—the wisdom of God in a mystery—the opposite of the wisdom of this world, *τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου*, and the opposite of the wisdom of the princes (principles) of this world, (1 Cor. ii. 6, 7.)

‘The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.’—As this seems to be an explanation it might be taken literally, if it were not for the caution just given. In fact, the angel is *telling* a mystery, rather than explaining it ; or, if explaining, his language is the language of vision. The terms he employs in the explanation are as *apocalyphtical* as those of any other part of the book, and as such are subject to further explanation.

The woman was first said to be sitting on *many waters*, (Rev. xvii. 1.) She is again said to be seen in a wilderness, sitting on a *beast*, (v. 3 ;) again she is said to be *carried* by the beast, (v. 7 ;) she is now spoken of as sitting, as being seated upon *seven mountains*. There must be something analogous in all these *sites*—something in which they have a common resemblance. The waters, the beast, and the mountains, are apparently different figures of the same foundation, upon which this *mystery*, Babylon, depends. Not only

this, but, according to what we suppose to be the correct reading, there is yet another figure of the same foundation, site, or support.

‘And there are seven kings.’—There is no warrant, in our apprehension, for the introduction of the word *there* in this place, as if the verb *εἶναι* were to be rendered impersonally; nor should there be a period at the end of the ninth verse. If we are right in these particulars, the exact reading of the Greek must be as follows: *The seven heads are seven mountains, where the woman sits upon them, and are seven kings.* That is, these seven heads are both seven mountains and seven kings—seven mountains or foundations, as representing fundamental principles; and seven kings, or chiefs, as representing ruling or leading principles. There is still another figure for this foundation of the mystery, or woman, as we shall find in the fifteenth verse. The waters upon which she is seen to sit are declared to be “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues,” a figure we have already supposed to represent powers of the earthly system. The mystery, Babylon, is thus sustained and carried forward by waters, by mountains, by kings, by peoples, nations, &c.—all of them representing fundamental, or leading principles, or supposed powers, of a pseudo economy of salvation; the different figures being intended to illustrate different characteristics of the same controlling or sustaining principles.

The figure of a woman is preserved throughout, but this woman is declared to be both a *mystery* and Babylon; and Babylon is known to have been both a city and an empire. The mystery must be always the same, however differently it is illustrated. It is always Babylon, having the same mixture; a system of the same adulterated character. As a human being, this mixed system is sustained by the beast; as a city, it is seated upon seven hills or mountains; and as an empire, it is said to be seated upon many waters, or rivers; while, as a kingdom, it is under the guidance or control of seven chiefs.

We have already enumerated, by way of suggestion, seven leading elements of a self-righteous system of salvation as the seven heads of the beast, (§ 294.) These elements may figuratively be spoken of either as foundations, (mountains,) or as chiefs or kings; that is, either as the fundamental or ruling principles of a system—principles from which the mixed system of the harlot emanates. These seven principles are composed however of a mixed multitude of subordinate doctrinal principles, originating from a misconstruction of the language of revelation, and tending to advocate supposed means of propitiation, (the atoning elements of the harlot’s plan of salvation.) Such a mixed assemblage of self-righteous elements may be spoken of sometimes as waters, (waters of the earth,) and sometimes as peoples, nations, &c., in contradistinction to the chosen people of God.

If we supply the definite article immediately in connection with the



words "seven kings," the reading would be, And the kings are seven ; or, And the seven heads are seven mountains, upon which the woman sitteth, and are *the* seven kings. The question would then occur, What kings ? which carries us back to the second verse of the chapter, where certain kings of the earth are spoken of, with whom the harlot is said to have maintained an illicit connexion. Our interpretation would then be about the same, limiting only these kings of the earth to the number *seven*—indicating an admixture of this Babylonish system, or mystery of atonement, with seven leading elements of that view of revelation (the earth) which supposes man to be dependent upon his own works, the position of our first parents when expelled from Paradise. As we have before remarked, the word translated kings may not only be rendered chiefs or leaders, but may apply to those presiding over sacred things, and is therefore a figure so much the more appropriate for leading elements of religious doctrine.

§ 391. 'Five are fallen,' &c.—A king or chief fallen, is one deprived of his power, or shown to be powerless. So we may suppose these five fallen kings to be principles, manifested to be without the power previously imputed to them. One, however, (the sixth,) still remains apparently in power. As all the world wondered after the beast, considering him the great power equal to God, so the world may be supposed still to wonder after the sixth element spoken of as a king.

If we are right in supposing the beast carrying the woman to be that seen rising from the sea, if his heads be the same seven heads then seen, and if these seven heads represent the seven kings as well as seven mountains, then one of these kings must be represented by the head which appeared *as it had been slain* and subsequently resuscitated.

We suppose the beast to represent a certain spirit of error, the parent or source of other errors. His seven heads we take to be so many leading erroneous principles. The head apparently once slain and alive again, we take to represent an error especially on the subject of the atonement ; that which we have termed self-atonement, (§§ 294 and 298,) an opposite of the true atonement of which Christ only is the source. Under the legal dispensation every subject of the law was held to make an adequate atonement for his own transgressions—this head of the beast was then *living*. Under the gospel, when fully understood, it is manifest that no atonement is sufficient, except that which Christ has offered. This head of the beast is then, as it were, wounded to death, slain. Under the mixed system, however, of the harlot, sustained as it is by the beast, the error prevails that the propitiation for the transgression of the sinner is something to be effected partly by the disciple and partly by Christ ; the sinner is to atone for himself as far as he can ; Christ is to make up the deficiency ; or the sinner, by some peculiar influence of the Holy Spirit, obtained through the oral intercession

of Christ, is now supposed to be enabled to atone for himself, or something of this kind, the error being susceptible of a variety of modifications. Such mixed views constitute the harlot's cup; and thus, under her reign or influence, this mistaken view of the power of self-atonement (the sixth king) may be considered in fact in full vigour; appearing, *in this stage of revelation*, to be in the full enjoyment of supreme authority; that is, wherever the harlot is seen sustained, as she here appears to be, by the beast.

The five fallen kings may be five doctrinal elements, or errors, so manifestly involving a supposition of the continuance of the legal dispensation as not to be admissible even in the harlot-system. The system of Babylon being an adulterated evangelical system, in the *state of things* now under contemplation, all elements purely legal are supposed to be powerless as means of salvation; their reign accordingly may be said to have passed away.

§ 392. When Joshua was about to take possession of the promised land, he was opposed by five kings or chiefs, (Joshua x. 5,) who had till then held possession of that country; one of these five, Adoni-Zedek, king of Jerusalem, calling in the other four as his auxiliaries. The name of this leader signifies the God of Justice, or the Justice of God. The Jerusalem, of which he was the king, was the old Jerusalem—the old vision of peace—peace to be obtained only by man's fulfilment of the law. The kingdom of this chief may have represented the economy of man's position by nature, of which divine justice is the controlling principle; the four auxiliary kings we may suppose to represent kindred judicial principles. The promised land represented, as before noticed, the *Rest* of the disciple—the position of relief afforded to the spiritual children of God by the free gift of eternal life; Joshua, or, as the name is expressed in Greek, *Jesus*, being the type of Christ—the leader of the disciple into the spiritual position of rest. As Joshua was opposed by these five aboriginal chiefs, so Christ, in leading his followers into *rest*, is opposed by corresponding judicial elements. The opposers of the Hebrew leader were entirely overcome; the sun standing still in Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, till their destruction was completely accomplished. In like manner, the revelation of the light of the Sun of righteousness must be continued until the manifestation is complete, that the elements of man's position by nature have been superseded by the principles of that economy of grace which may be said to constitute his promised *rest*.

In adverting to a similar figure, it was said by an apostle, Acts xiii. 19, that seven nations, the original possessors of Canaan, were cast out to make room for the people of Israel;—as if all elements of man's legal position must be removed before a full view of his state of rest by grace could be fairly exhibited. Nevertheless, to humble and to prove the Israelites, prone as they were to forget the only author of their enjoyments, certain of these aboriginals were left amongst them, (Judges ii. 22, 23;) nor were they

ever entirely relieved from this mixed multitude till after the rebuilding of the temple, subsequent to returning from their Babylonish captivity, (Nehemiah xiii. 1-3.) So it appears to have been with the exhibition of the means of salvation afforded in the time of the harlot, and under the reign of this sixth king. The legal principles are supposed to be overcome, but there are still certain self-righteous powers asserting their prerogative to reign in this kingdom of the beast; for we suppose the beast himself to govern, through the instrumentality of his seven heads.

The children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites, and they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods, (Judges iii. 5;) an illustration of the amalgamation subsequently taking place in the views of the Christian world, and of Christian disciples individually, in matters pertaining to the mystery or economy of salvation.

The existing error at the epoch contemplated in this passage of the Apocalypse, is a mixed view of the doctrine of atonement, an essential power of salvation, and accordingly represented as a king or chief. It is said *to be*, not merely in reference to a latent existence, but rather in reference to its manifestation. It is now manifested; the cup of the harlot, and the harlot herself, as figures, being instruments of bringing this peculiar error to light.

‘The other is not yet come.’—It would be premature for us at present to attempt to point out what is to be understood by this *seventh* king. Like the others, we suppose it to be some leading erroneous principle of the dominion of the beast, (self;) and from its number (seven) we think it probable that it pertains especially to the doctrine of the **REST** peculiar to the Christian plan of salvation, and typified by the seventh day of the week, even as early as the creation of the world. If the sixth king be considered as remaining in power till the destruction of Babylon, we cannot look for a revelation of this *seventh* till after we have completed the details of that destruction; that is, not till after the conclusion of the next chapter. When this seventh error is manifested, it is said that he (the king) is to continue but a short space. We suppose this to be an intimation that the eradication of the previous six errors will so pave the way for the fall of the seventh, that its exhibition and the termination of its power will be almost coincident.

‘And the beast that was, and is not,’ &c.—The beast representing the element of *self* was manifest as in full power under the legal dispensation; he was then recognized. Under the gospel dispensation it is not so, although his influence secretly lurks in the prevailing perverted views of the gospel.

‘Even he is the eighth.’—That is, when the chief element to which these



seven principles belong (or which itself is constituted of these seven principles) shall be revealed, its manifestation will be equivalent to that of an eighth king, or ruling principle. He “is of the seven,” or *out of*, or from the seven, as the Greek preposition *ἐκ* implies; the element of *self* emanating from these seven *selfish* principles. An exhibition of the seven leading errors involves that of the parent stock. And as error is no sooner detected and exhibited than it is overthrown; so the manifestation of this eighth, consisting as it does in that of the seven, is no sooner perfected than the error itself is destroyed, or goes into perdition. The seventh king may be said to remain a short space. The eighth, when thus detected and exposed, is not to be considered as enduring even for a time: he goeth into perdition almost simultaneously with the exposure of his true character;—this revelation and destruction of the eighth king, or the beast itself, corresponding with the manifestation and destruction of *that wicked* spoken of by Paul, 2 Thess. ii. 8, whose revelation and perdition appear to be equally coincident. So we suppose the predominance of the seven erroneous principles, the constituent elements of the beast, to correspond with the working of the mystery of iniquity alluded to by the apostle in the verse immediately preceding that above quoted.

Vs. 12, 13. And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

Καὶ τὰ δέκα κέρατα, ἃ εἶδες, δέκα βασιλεῖς εἰσιν, οἵτινες βασιλείαν οὐπω ἔλαβον, ἀλλ' ἐξουσίαν ὡς βασιλεῖς μίαν ὥραν λαμβάνουσι μετὰ τοῦ θηρίου. Οὗτοι μίαν γνώμην ἔχουσι, καὶ τὴν δύναμιν καὶ τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἑαυτῶν τῷ θηρίῳ διδώσιν.

§ 393. ‘And the ten horns which thou sawest,’ &c.—These ten horns we have before supposed to be figures of the ten commandments—the decalogue—the ten collectively representing the whole power of the law; kings or chiefs being political powers, as horns are animal or physical powers. The terms horns and kings are convertible; neither of them to be taken in a literal sense, and both alike are terms of vision.

These ten kings or powers are said to have received no kingdom *as yet*; or, as the Greek word *οὐπω* might be rendered, have *not* received, or have *never* received a kingdom;\* which seems more consistent with what is said immediately afterwards of their being overcome by the Lamb, implying that if they have not hitherto received a kingdom, neither are they hereafter to receive it. They receive power as kings or chiefs, however, one hour with the beast; that is, their power is contemporaneous with that of the beast.

The word translated *hour*, in its original sense, expresses *time, year*,

\* *Οὐπω*, *nondum, nunquam*, (Suiceri Lex.,) *not yet, never*, (Donnegan.)

*season*, (Donnegan.) We cannot suppose the sense to be restricted here literally to *one hour*; but it appears very reasonable to consider that, as the ten horns of an animal would possess their physical power during the life of the animal, so these ten kings, represented by such horns, must possess their power, whatever it be, during the reign of the beast, for the same time or period—certainly not subsequently to his destruction. So, according to our views of the element represented by the beast, wherever *self* reigns, there the power of the law must be felt in full operation. So long as man is dependent upon his own works, so long he must be subject to the power of the law, and obnoxious to its penalties. Thus the ten kings and the beast possess power for one and the same period.

Corresponding with this construction, it is added, “these (the ten kings) have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.” They act in concert with the beast; the tendency of their action is the same; they have, as it were, the same end in view; their action thus in unison in effect is the same in subjecting the disciple to a state of bondage, placing him in the position of a slave, furnishing only mercenary and selfish motives of conduct, and prompting him in his efforts to fulfil the law for himself, to seek his own glory instead of seeking the glory of God.

The ten kings give their power and strength unto the beast, and indeed the beast depends upon them for his power and strength. They are, as we have remarked in treating of the ten horns, (§ 294,) his weapons—the instruments of power by which he enforces his authority, and maintains his dominion. “The law is good, if a man use it lawfully;”—here its use is supposed to be perverted. These ten horns, as we shall see hereafter, are designed to fulfil the will of God, (Rev. xvii. 17;) but while on the beast, and while acting in concert with him, and while he sustains the harlot, they are fulfilling the will of the beast, and not that of God; that is, for the period allotted for this joint action. During this period they represent the law unlawfully used; its *power and strength* being given to a service for which it was not designed, except in a qualified sense.

As the power to work out a righteousness of one’s own depends upon the continuance of the legal economy, so the power of *self* depends upon the power of the law; as, if the law be fulfilled by Christ, there is no room for the pretensions of self; in which case his reign ceases.

V. 14. These shall make war with the Lamb and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him (are) called, and chosen, and faithful.

Οὗτοι μετὰ τοῦ ἀρνίου πολέμῳσουσι, καὶ τὸ ἀρνίον νικήσει αὐτούς, ὅτι κύριος κυρίων ἐστὶ καὶ βασιλεὺς βασιλείων, καὶ οἱ μετ’ αὐτοῦ κλητοὶ καὶ ἐκλεκτοὶ καὶ πιστοί.

§ 394. ‘These shall make war,’ &c.—We are here to ask, With what

is it that the Lamb has to contend? What is it that the Lamb overcomes? The allusion is indisputably to Christ in his propitiatory character, as "The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," (John i. 29.) The war or contest must be between the power of propitiation on the one side, and the power or requisitions of the law on the other. The ten horns, or ten kings, represent the exactions of the law, which, so far as the sinner is concerned, are requisitions of vindictive justice, calling for the condemnation and punishment of the offender. The law, in the first instance, exacts perfect obedience; this exaction not having been complied with, the legal call is for vengeance upon every soul of man that doeth evil. Here the mercy of God is exhibited, not in changing the nature of the law, or in relaxing the claims of divine justice, but in providing an adequate satisfaction for these claims—fulfilling the commandments of the law by substitution; a vicarious fulfilment equal to an atonement for the past, and a provision for the future. The propitiatory and justificatory elements of the plan of redemption being all represented in the person of the Lamb of God, as the opposite legal elements are represented in the persons of the ten kings, or in the combined power of the ten horns of the beast.

Here then we have, in the exhibition of a contest on earth, a figure parallel with that before represented as a war in heaven—Michael and his angels fighting against the accuser and his angels, (§ 279.) The field of battle, in which these ten kings ventured to meet the Lamb, is the wilderness; an earthly field; an exhibition of transactions on the earth, while the other was a representation of something going on in heaven, equivalent to a delineation of the operations of the divine mind, in that process in which mercy and truth meet together, and righteousness (justice) and peace are reconciled. The contest on earth represents the gradual development of the same issue between the same conflicting elements, and the same final result. These are not two wars, but two representations of the same war; the question at issue being not merely whether man shall be saved or lost, but also whether, if saved, the glory shall redound to God, the deliverer, or to the redeemed sinner, the helpless object of divine mercy. Christ and his forces (the principle of divine propitiation and the elements of evangelical truth) contend for the glory of GOD, and the exaltation of his name alone; the principles of legality warring on behalf of self, as the horns of the beast aim only at promoting the glory and exalting the name of *man*.

'The Lamb shall overcome them,' &c.—As Michael, the representative of the gracious power of divine Sovereignty, overcame the dragon, (the representative of the condemning power of legal accusation,) so the element of propitiation, the offspring of that divine Sovereignty, overcomes the condemning power of those legal elements upon the action of which the beast



(self,) depends for his claim to sovereignty, and for the blasphemous promotion of his glory.

The Lamb overcame these ten kings when He who knew no sin became, as the apostle says, (2 Cor. iii. 9,) sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him. As Jesus himself said to his disciples, (John xvi. 33,) "In the world (in your position by nature under the law and dependent upon your own merits) ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." To which we may add, as an explanation, the language of Paul, Rom. vi. 14, "Ye are no longer under the law, but under grace." So when the same apostle, labouring under a deep sense of humiliation, apparently occasioned by some besetting sin, earnestly prayed for deliverance, the answer he received was not a removal of this *thorn in the flesh*, but the assurance of a counteracting remedy: "My grace is sufficient for thee: my strength is made perfect in weakness," (2 Cor. xi. 9;) the greatness of the power of Christ to save being manifested by the weakness of the sinner, in whose behalf that power is exercised, as sovereign grace alone is sufficient to counteract the liability to condemnation to which the transgressor is subjected. "The law entered that the offence might abound, (that sin might be manifested to be exceeding sinful;) but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord," (Rom. v. 20, 21.) Such is the nature of the contest between the Lamb and the ten kings, and such the manner in which they are overcome.

§ 395. 'For he is Lord of lords and King of kings.'—He, the Lamb, (God, once manifest in the flesh,) is supreme; as in fact nothing but sovereign supremacy can control and overcome the requisitions of sovereign justice. Christ overcomes even the power of the divine law, because it is God himself who performs the wondrous work, (2 Cor. v. 19.)

'He is King of kings,' &c., or Chief of chiefs—not merely supreme over temporal dignitaries or political chiefs, but over all principles or elements, whether in a spiritual or temporal sense. The righteousness of Christ is sufficient to fulfil the law in behalf of man, because it is the righteousness of God himself; wherefore it is said, he shall be called *Jehovah our righteousness*. The vicarious arrangement above contemplated is effectual, because it is the arrangement of the Sovereign Ruler, who virtually takes upon himself the penal consequences of the redeemed sinner's guilt, that He may impart to that sinner the merit of his own righteousness; the revelation of the mystery being adapted to the comprehension of the feeble intellect of man by the work of Christ on earth—the work of him who was the express image of the Father, and the brightness of his glory.

To assert the supremacy of the Lamb (God manifest in the flesh) over the kings of the earth, in the ordinary sense, would appear the proposition of a mere truism. We cannot suppose this to be the design of a mystic revelation like that under consideration; but when we apply this supremacy of Christ to legal and even to moral principles, as we have done, then indeed we perceive something like the development of a mystery—a hidden mystery.

A case in point may illustrate the nature of the supremacy we have in view. The law required the strict observance of the Sabbath; so strict as not even to allow the gathering of *manna* on that day; so strict as to call for the death of him who was found *gathering sticks* on that day: yet Jesus allowed his disciples to pluck the ears of wheat on the Sabbath, and to prepare the grain for eating, by rubbing it in their hands. The disciples were accused of doing that which was not *lawful*. This point was not controverted by Jesus. He took higher ground: "The Son of man," said he, "is Lord (master) of the Sabbath," Luke vi. 1-5. God instituted the Sabbath, and God alone can be said to be Lord or master of it. Jesus, therefore, as God manifest in the flesh, here asserted his prerogative. As he made the law originally, so he was master of it, to modify or even to dispense with it. In like manner, he is Chief of chiefs and Master of masters of the elements of law, as well as of all the elements of nature; and it is for this reason that his propitiatory satisfaction of the law is adequate to the requisition.

'And they that are with him (are) called, and chosen, and faithful.'—The verb *are* is supplied in our common version, and the Latin version of G. and L. supplies the pronoun *qui*, (who.) We might perhaps with equal propriety supply both, and read the clause, For he is Lord of lords, and King of kings, and those with him, who are called *both chosen and faithful*—alluding to the true sayings of God, Rev. xix. 9, and xxii. 6; and to the true and faithful words (*οἱ λόγοι πιστοὶ καὶ ἀληθινοὶ*) spoken of Rev. xxi. 5. The terms translated *called and chosen*, occur nowhere else in the Apocalypse. We suppose all these epithets to apply to elements of the plan of salvation by grace—elements of Gospel truth—probably the same as the one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed ones seen with the Lamb on the Mount Zion, and supposed to accompany him throughout the circumstances here narrated; the element of propitiation (the Lamb,) together with all the other elements of the divine plan of salvation, maintaining a predominance over the legal principles represented by these ten kings. Christ has laboured, and his ransomed followers enter into his labours. His disciples are the beneficiaries for whom the battle has been fought; they have not been sharers in the contest, nor can they claim any part of the glory or sovereignty resulting from the victory, except it be by *imputation*. All the elements of divine goodness, led on by

the chief element, (a divine atonement,) have been engaged in manifesting the work of man's redemption—man himself is but the sinner saved.

V. 15. And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

Καὶ λέγει μοι· τὰ ὕδατα ἃ εἶδες, οὗ ἡ πόρνη κάθεται, λαοὶ καὶ ὄχλοι εἰσὶ καὶ ἔθνη καὶ γλῶσσαι.

§ 396. 'And he saith unto me,' &c.—In making the explanatory relation occupying the last five verses, the angel appears as if led away from his original design of showing the mystery of the *woman*, and he now goes back to resume the thread of his narration where he left it, in the ninth verse. The harlot was then spoken of as sitting upon seven mountains, and now the reader or the apostle is reminded that this site is identic with that of the *many waters* upon which she was said to sit at the commencement of the chapter.

We have already spoken of these waters as symbolic of professed means of atonement peculiar to the earthly system; these professed means, when classed under seven heads, appearing as seven foundations, (mountains,) upon which a mixed system of salvation may be supposed to rest, and the same means figuratively spoken of as waters of the earth, in allusion to the rivers of the ancient empire of Babylon, being equally symbolized by peoples, multitudes, &c., as pseudo powers of salvation belonging to the earthly system; these last appellations (peoples, nations, &c.) being as much terms of vision and as figurative as the waters, horns, mountains, or kings. The sitting of the harlot upon these peoples, nations, &c., may represent the support furnished to the mixed system by these false foundations, and the reciprocal influence of this mixed system upon the earthly principles sustaining it—an influence already alluded to as producing the insanity by which all participants of the cup of Babylon are characterized. These nations, however, as well as the kings just noticed, are to be overcome by him who is Lord of lords, who is to rule them as with a rod of iron. So, likewise, the time also is to come when the mountain of the Lord's house is to be established on the tops of the mountains, when these seven foundations upon which the woman sitteth will appear in their proper subordinate light, or, like the old earth, will have passed away.

This variety of illustration we do not suppose to be unnecessary or merely ornamental: no doubt each of the figures afford illustrations peculiar to themselves, none of them being so redundant as to be spared without prejudice to the completeness of the *revelation*.

Vs. 16, 17. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall

Καὶ τὰ δέκα κέρατα, ἃ εἶδες, καὶ τὸ θη-  
ρίον, οὗτοι μισήσουσι τὴν πόρνην, καὶ ἡρη-



hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

μοιμένην ποιήσουσιν αὐτήν καὶ γυμνὴν, καὶ τὰς σάρκας αὐτῆς φάγονται, καὶ αὐτήν κατακαύσουσιν ἐν πυρὶ. Ὁ γὰρ Θεὸς ἔδωκεν εἰς τὰς καρδίας αὐτῶν, ποιῆσαι τὴν γνώμην αὐτοῦ, καὶ ποιῆσαι γνώμην μίαν, καὶ δοῦναι τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτῶν τῷ θηρίῳ, ἕχρι τελεσθῶσιν οἱ λόγοι τοῦ Θεοῦ.

§ 397. ‘And the ten horns,’ &c.—These horns or powers are those just now declared to be ten kings, but the figure is again changed or brought back to its original character, to adapt it to the particular illustration about to be made. Not only so, with the *license of vision* these horns are represented as themselves carnivorous animals, and also as animals or persons capable of the passion of hatred, as well as of exercising a certain degree of reason and intelligence.

‘These shall *hate*,’ &c.—The verb is the same as that employed in speaking of the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, (Rev. ii. 6.) We suppose the hatred to be of a like character in both cases: the first indeed is spoken of as the hatred of God, and the last as that of the ten horns; but then the reason assigned for this hatred of the horns is, that God has put it into their hearts to do his will. The horns hate because God hath caused them to hate. We have supposed the Nicolaitan system to be a mixture of pretended faith in Christ, and of real dependence upon one’s own righteousness; and the system of the harlot to be the same species of mixture. The ten horns represent the law: the law is as much opposed to a *mixed* system as the element of sovereign grace is opposed to it. The tendency of the law (unlawfully used) is to establish the dominion of self; the law recognizes no middle course: whoever fulfils the law, must do it altogether for himself. If a man fulfil the law entirely for himself, the glory is entirely his, and he is independent of God. Thus, the requisitions of the law, if limited in their action to man’s fulfilment, act on the side of *self*. Self, in pursuit of vainglory, in its efforts to maintain the independence of man, may give birth to a mixed system, originate and sustain such a system, but the law in the nature of the case is opposed to every modified plan of this kind;—every one of its requisitions must be obeyed, and this exactly. The law hates the harlot system, because, on the principle of law, there can be no division of glory. God hates the harlot system, or the Nicolaitan system, because, on the principle of *grace*, He will not divide his glory with another. Thus the principles of the law and the gospel are equally opposed to a plan of salvation of the character of an amalgamation.

‘And shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.’—Here are four several illustrations of the action of these horns, all of them resulting as we apprehend in the one action of the law

upon the mixed system, showing its entire worthlessness and inefficacy in furnishing a means of salvation.

The scriptural figure of a desolate woman, is that of something entirely barren and unfruitful ; not merely an unmarried woman, but one without children ;—children, as already noticed, being figures of merits or means of justification ; as, in patriarchal times, the whole family of the head of a tribe constituted his political power, his means of defence, upon which he relied in any contest with a neighbouring chieftain. Children, too, as handing down the name of their progenitors to posterity, were depended upon for maintaining the glory of the house. The action of the law upon the harlot or mixed system, proves it to be incapable of furnishing any merit or righteousness, or means of salvation or of glory : thus brought to the test of the law, it is proved to be *desolate*.

Corresponding with this action, the same test shows this system to be incapable of furnishing a garment of salvation or a robe of righteousness. The harlot never did appear arrayed in the fine linen which is the righteousness of the saints ; she pretended to consider, we may suppose, her trappings of purple and scarlet to be far better than a clothing of linen, pure and white. The mixed system professes to furnish a vesture of propitiation of man's own working out ; as if the sinner had trodden the wine-press for himself ; but being tried by the requisitions of the law, it is manifested to be incapable of furnishing any garment of salvation equal to affording a shelter from the wrath to come : the harlot is made *naked*, or manifested to be so.

In the same manner we have supposed *flesh* to represent the moral perfection or righteousness constituting the means of eternal life. The flesh of the harlot must represent the pretended moral perfection proposed to be acquired by that mixed system. The exactions of the law applied to this perfection eats it up, as a voracious animal devours flesh without being satisfied by it, and as all the offerings for sin under the law were eaten up or otherwise entirely consumed ; while the one offering of the body of Jesus, after having satisfied all the requirements of infinite justice, remained itself entire : not a bone of it was broken ; nor did his flesh see corruption ;—his offering alone being more than sufficient to meet the requisition.

§ 398. ‘ And burn her with fire.’—This last figure comprehends apparently the action of the other three. The revealed word, as we have repeatedly assumed, is the fire by which every doctrine or doctrinal element is to be tried. The law, brought to bear upon the system of the harlot, destroys all its pretensions ; but this process of bringing the law to act upon the doctrinal system in question, is effected through the operation of the revealed word—the last bearing testimony to the first. The requisi-

tions of the law (the ten horns) thus act through the instrumentality of the word of revelation—the word of God, understood in its proper spiritual sense ; and which the Lord himself compares to a fire, (Jer. xxiii. 29.)

This description of the fate of the harlot corresponds very nearly with that given by the apostle James of the fate of the *rich*—those esteeming themselves rich, in a spiritual sense :—“ Go to, (ye) rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon (you :) your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten ; your gold and your silver are cankered ; and the rust of them shall be witness against you, and shall eat your *flesh* as it were fire.” There is something also in the character and tendency of the mixed system very closely resembling the characteristics of the angel of the Laodicean church ; as it is said of that angel, “ I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot : I would that thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth, because thou sayest, I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing ; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”

There is a difference in the reading of the Greek editions in the first part of this verse. According to some, as in our common English version, the ten horns only of the beast hate and make war upon the harlot : according to others, as in the Greek from which we copy, the ten horns and the beast unite in this hatred and hostile action. We are inclined to think our common version most correct in this particular, although were it otherwise the difference would not affect our construction. In the nature of the case, *self* (the beast) as well as the law must be hostile to the *mixed system*, because *self* claims the whole glory of the work of salvation ; representing man to be equal with God, in being the efficient cause of his own eternal life and happiness. It might be still a question whether God could be said to put it into the heart of *self*, as well as into that of the ten horns or elements of the law, “ to do his will.” We think it might be so spoken, as in the case of Pharaoh, whose heart God is said to have hardened ; that is, God put it into the heart of Pharaoh to refuse to let the children of Israel go, in order that by so doing the miraculous power exercised in their behalf might be exhibited, and the whole typical action of their history carried out for the subsequent illustration of gospel truth. So far we esteem the difference of editions immaterial. In either case, the powers to which the harlot trusted, by which the scheme of adulteration is sustained, (whether powers of the ten horns alone, or their powers with that of the beast,) become eventually the instruments of her destruction. The confused system of amalgamation is first destroyed ; after which, the question of compromise being at an end, the beast (*self*) throws off all disguise—*that wicked* is revealed



or unveiled—self claims the whole of the glory of man's salvation, and prepares for the final trial,—the battle of Armageddon.

'For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give,' &c.—Here the ten horns only must be spoken of; for it could be hardly necessary to state that the beast agreed with the ten horns in the giving of their kingdom to him, unless there were some reciprocity in this agreement, of which there is no intimation.

As it was just now said of these ten horns, or kings—for the figure of royalty is resumed in this verse—that they had received no kingdom, and, subsequently, that they were overcome by the Lamb, we must take them to represent so many chiefs, assuming no independent sway, but acting in concert, and conferring their aggregate power upon some other object, and this as by divine appointment for a limited period. As it was said of Herod and Pilate, with the Gentiles (the Romans) and people of Israel, that they conspired together "to do whatever the hand and counsel of God determined before to be done," (Acts iv. 27, 28;) Gentiles and Jews, in the persons of their chiefs, being made the instruments of manifesting the propitiatory purpose of God, although not doing the will of God from the heart; so, in the present case, the principles of the law, together with the element of self, are made to co-operate in manifesting the folly and inutility of a mixed plan or economy of redemption. As the ten kings act in concert in giving their power to the beast, so we may say of the requisitions of the law, their tendency is to make those sovereign who fulfil them. Thus, lawfully used, they establish the sovereignty of Christ, by whom alone they have or can be really fulfilled, in the strict sense of the term. Unlawfully used, they tend to establish the sovereignty of self upon the pretension of a like fulfilment. To the promotion of this latter object their power is applied for a certain period.

'Until the words of God shall be fulfilled;' or, until the purposes (οἱ λόγοι) of God are accomplished, finished, or brought to an end; or until all that is written in the revealed word of God is accomplished;—the progress of error being the means by which truth is eventually manifested. The moment when the harlot, or mixed system of propitiation, gives way to the beast; when the principles of *law* are so universally misapplied or unlawfully used as to exhibit *self* in his most blasphemous position, the true character of his pretensions to entire sovereignty being revealed, (the man of sin "as God sitting in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God;" the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place;) then the time of the end may be said to have approached—the time when the revelation of the purposes of God shall be brought to an end, as the verb τελεσθίσονται implies;—the destruction of the kingdom of the beast very speedily following that of the harlot system.

V. 18. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

Καὶ ἡ γυνὴ, ἣν εἶδες, ἔστιν ἡ πόλις ἡ μεγάλη  
 ἣ ἔχουσα βασιλείαν ἐπὶ τῶν βασιλείων  
 τῆς γῆς.

§ 399. 'And the woman which thou sawest,' &c.—If any doubt remained as to the identity of this harlot with the apocalyptic city Babylon, that doubt must now be removed. She is here expressly declared to be *that great city*; and having been seen bearing upon her forehead the name of Babylon, it must be evident that the great city and Babylon are identic; confirming the interpretation we have heretofore adopted of these several figures. Accordingly, if the great city Babylon has its opposite in the holy city, (the new Jerusalem,) the opposite of the woman just now described is the bride, the Lamb's wife. These particulars may be important to us hereafter in ascertaining the true character of the object symbolized by the *Bride*, &c.

This last verse serves as a hinge by which the subject of this chapter is connected with that of the subsequent chapter; or rather it is a sign of equality, showing the correspondence of the narrative just related with that which is immediately to follow; the division into chapters, as we are to bear in mind, being no part of the original composition.

'Which reigneth over the kings of the earth.'—That is, reigneth over these kings by the influence of her cup of abominations: the influence of the mixed element of propitiation peculiar to the harlot system upon the leading elements of self-righteous systems generally. These kings we suppose to be the seven kings, or all the kings or leading principles of the imperial system of the beast. As the Roman empire was sometimes politically termed the whole earth; and as the empire of Babylon was hyperbolically said by the prophet to extend to the end of the earth; so the empire of the beast (*self*) may be said to be coextensive with the apocalyptic earth, and these seven kings or chiefs, the heads of the beast, to be pre-eminently the kings of the earth; or, the number seven being equivalent to a totality, these seven kings of the earth may be put for all leading earthly principles.

We do not suppose the ten kings (horns) to be included in the number of these kings of the earth, both because they are said to have no kingdom, and because, instead of being reigned over by the harlot, they are described as hating and destroying her: not only rendering her desolate, and naked, and eating her flesh, but also burning or consuming her with fire; further particulars being given of this destruction by *fire* in the next chapter, although the powers instrumentally causing the conflagration are not again adverted to. The burning of the harlot, however, Rev. xvii. 16, and the burning of the city, Rev. xviii. 8, are both expressed by the same Greek verb, *καταναίω*, the preposition *κατά* giving intensity to the action of the

verb. The woman and the city are both *burned up*, or entirely consumed ; one judgment is not a continuation of the other, but both descriptions apply to the same destruction.

#### RETROSPECT.

§ 400. The account of the judgment of Babylon is not yet completed, although, so far as it is represented by that of the harlot, it may be said to terminate with the declaration at the close of this chapter, that *the woman is the great city*. While we look forward, therefore, to learn the fate of this city, we must carry with us a recollection of what we have learned of its character from the description afforded under the duplex figure of this illustration.

This great city then is Babylon,—the opposite of the Holy City. As its name imports, its composition is a mixture of heterogeneous elements representing a false economy of salvation, the opposite of that symbolized by the “Jerusalem which is from above.” This city has its *many waters* ; corresponding with the language of the prophet,\* (Jer. ii. 13,) “O thou, that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, (and) the measure of thy covetousness.” These waters are its sources of dependence ; as the resources of an empire depend upon its rivers or upon the *multitudes* subject to its control ; and as the dependence of a mixed system of salvation must be upon a variety of imaginary means of propitiation or atonement. The follower of the harlot exclaims, almost in the language of the Syrian, (2 Kings v. 12,) Are not the many waters of Babylon better than the pure river of the water of life? may I not wash in them and be clean? But means of propitiation are not only the foundations of a system of salvation, they are also the professed element of eternal happiness. The harlot has her cup of abominations, a mixture of the wine of divine atonement with the strong drink of human means of propitiation. The character of this mixture is to deceive ; making *mad* those that drink of it, and depriving them of the inclination, and even of the ability of participating in the true cup of salvation.

The waters of Babylon, or the nations of that empire, represent the means of salvation erroneously supposed to be within the power of man to

\* We can hardly compare chs. xvii. and xviii. of the Apocalypse with chs. i. and li. of Jeremiah, without being struck with the resemblance of their descriptions, and even the sameness of some of their expressions. The temporal calamities of Babylon were, no doubt, a primary fulfilment of the predictions of the prophet ; but there must be an ulterior fulfilment of them we think, and this is apparently the same as that represented by the destruction of the apocalyptic Babylon.



provide for himself ; as her *treasures*, spoken of by the prophet, may represent her pretended resources for the ransom of the soul. *Self*, accordingly, in this respect is the real object of dependence ; and in correspondence with this error, Babylon is seen sitting on the *beast*.

The various grounds upon which man claims to be the author of his own salvation, may be classed under seven different heads, as already suggested ; but they are all the heads of the same blasphemous element, (self.) Accordingly, whether the harlot be represented as sitting upon these seven heads, (mountains,) or upon the beast himself, the figure is nearly equivalent. Whether these seven grounds of human pretension be symbolized by mountains or kings, the difference is principally in the allusion to them, as fundamental or as leading principles. In either case the mixed system is so intimately connected with these seven pretensions as to be immediately dependent upon them, influenced by them, or identified with them.

The deluded disciple, in defending his adulterated views of salvation, finds it necessary to appeal especially to the continued action of the law. He professes to believe in the atonement and mediation of the Son of God ; but Jesus himself, he says, has declared that he came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it ; and that one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled, (Matt. v. 17, 18.) Consequently, it is argued, the power of the law is as great as it ever was ; for the law has not yet been fulfilled by *man*, and therefore has not passed away. If man be saved, then, it must be partly through what Christ has done for him, and partly through what he may do for himself. Thus the mixed system depends for its support upon the pretensions of self, armed with the powers of the law ; the harlot in the wilderness sitting on the beast with seven heads and ten horns.

While, however, the follower of the harlot employs the law to advocate the claims of his mixed system, the law itself, when brought to act in its proper sense upon that system, necessarily destroys it ; showing, that as Christ came to fulfil the law, unless he did fulfil it there can be no hope of its fulfilment from any source.

The system of the harlot is a system of *covetousness*, of mercenary and selfish motives ; the law requires purity of motive as well as obedience of conduct, and tried by this test, the pretended fulfilment of the law, upon which the mixed system depends for its efficacy, is consumed as it were by *fire*.

The picture of delusion presented in this chapter we suppose to apply in the first instance to the principles or elements of a doctrinal system ; but there is something analogous to it passing in the mind of every disciple : something of which the experienced Christian must be more and more convinced, as he examines his own heart. Every one, however deeply convinced of sin, of righteousness, and judgment, may find within himself a proneness to lean

upon some means of atonement of his own providing ; some portion of his conduct, or some exercise of his religious feelings, to which he trusts as a means of propitiating the justice of an offended God. He has his cup of salvation, his wine of atonement ; but it is a *mixture*. The atonement of Christ may form a part of it ; but his own repentance, his own reformation, his vows, his new resolutions, his inward mortifications, and outward meritorious performances, (as he esteems them,) all enter into the composition of *his cup* : God is in effect deprived of the glory of his own work of salvation.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

THE DESOLATION OF BABYLON.—THE CONFLAGRATION.  
—THE ANATHEMA.

Vs. 1, 2, 3. And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

Καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον ἄλλον ἄγγελον καταβαῖνοντὰ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ἔχοντα ἔξουσίαν μεγάλην· καὶ ἡ γῆ ἐφωτίσθη ἐκ τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ. Καὶ ἔκραξεν ἐν ἰσχυρᾷ φωνῇ λέγων· ἔπεσεν, ἔπεσε Βαβυλὼν ἡ μεγάλη, καὶ ἐγένετο κατοικητήριον δαιμόνων καὶ φυλακὴ παντὸς πνεύματος ἀκαθάρτου καὶ φυλακὴ παντὸς ὀρνέου ἀκαθάρτου καὶ μεμισημένου· ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς πορνείας αὐτῆς πέποκε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, καὶ οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς μετ' αὐτῆς ἐπόρνευσαν, καὶ οἱ ἔμποροι τῆς γῆς ἐκ τῆς δυνάμεως τοῦ σιγήνους αὐτῆς ἐπλούτησαν.

§ 401. 'And after these things,' &c.—After having seen in the wilderness Babylon in the midst of her glory, under the figure of an adulterous woman, after having been made acquainted with the mystery of her power, and after having heard the prediction of her final destruction as by fire, the apostle is furnished with further particulars of the desolations of this great city, and of the final destruction awaiting her *by fire*, corresponding with the prediction in the sixteenth verse of the preceding chapter. The scenery is now changed: the apostle is restored to the position he occupied as a spectator at the pouring out of the seventh vial, when the great city was divided into three parts, and Babylon came in remembrance before God. The figure of a woman is dropped; and consequently the corresponding figures of the manner in which this woman was to be destroyed, are also dropped, except that of the action of fire, the only one of the four figures before employed applicable to the nature of the subject, (a city,) now about to be described.

In order the better to preserve the connection, we may set aside the *episode* of the seventeenth chapter, and read as from the end of the sixteenth, 'After these things;' that is, after the earthquake, after the division of the city, and after the fall of the great hail out of heaven, 'I saw,' &c.



‘ Another angel come down,’ &c. ; or, coming down out of heaven.—Another revelation—another important development of truth ; a revelation of such importance as to throw an extraordinary light upon the whole mystery or scheme spoken of as the earth. The effect of this light, we suppose to be such as virtually to perform what the angel is said to proclaim ; that is, when Babylon is seen to be fallen, or to be in the state of destitution and desolation described by the angel, the earth is lightened with the glory resulting from this great development of truth.

‘ And he cried mightily,’ &c.—This expression we suppose to be equivalent to that of the great power and glory of the angel ; indicating something in the revelations made of a peculiarly mighty and overpowering character, beyond all other revelations, and still more beyond all imaginations of man ; as it is the characteristic of a very strong voice to overcome all other sounds or voices. Indeed the appearance of this angel corresponds in some degree with that predicted of the coming of the Son of man—as the lightning that shineth from one end of heaven unto the other, and the sound as of the trump of God overcoming all other sounds. So we may say, when Christ is fully revealed or unveiled, the effect of this revelation must be virtually to exhibit the fallen state of the mixed or harlot system.

‘ Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become,’ &c.—The angel following the messenger of the everlasting gospel, had before proclaimed this fall of Babylon, (Rev. xiv. 8.) but this was a declaration in the *midst of heaven* ; it is now represented as something taking place on earth.

As the great city was said to be “ divided into three parts,” and as the action of the ten horns upon the harlot is described as producing three different results previous to her final destruction by fire, so the fall of Babylon is here characterized by three different features of desolation ; depicting, apparently, the condition of the city prior to its utter destruction by fire : although this threefold figure of desolation may be an equivalent of that of the conflagration afterwards described, the two illustrations representing in effect the same entire destruction.

§ 402. ‘ The habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird.’—The place of dwelling of *demons*, and the place of custody of all unclean spirits, and of all unclean and hateful birds. The figure does not imply that these unclean spirits and hateful birds choose Babylon as a dwelling-place : their own inclination would lead them to fly abroad, to contaminate other spirits and other places ; but they are now confined to Babylon, as this great city is on the other hand restricted to furnishing a dwelling for them.

As affecting a doctrinal system or view of a plan of redemption, we presume the change in Babylon to be, not in her nature or real character, but in her appearance. The truth being developed, this great city, once

apparently so magnificent, is now seen to be what she really is, a mere *menagerie* of unclean and ferocious beasts ; or the habitation of maniacs. The mixed system, like the whited sepulchre, appears beautiful outwardly, but within it is full of all uncleanness, (Matt. xxiii. 27.) The ornamented tomb being opened, and the sculptured marble laid aside, the interior exhibits but a mass of putrefaction. This interior was the same before the opening of the tomb as afterwards ; it is only the appearance that is changed.

‘The habitation of demons,’ (*δαμόνων*)—something different from devils or accusers ; these latter being more peculiarly elements of a legal system. The demon of the Hebrews was an *unclean spirit* ; but we do not suppose that to be the sense here, because the term unclean spirits is mentioned immediately in connection with these demons as something additional. Among the Greeks, demons were a species of divinities, good and bad, occupying, in the estimation of the heathen, the place of gods. In this respect, these demons may represent the blasphemous elements of the mixed system ; principles of doctrine tending to represent men as the authors of their own eternal well-being. Principles, tending to create in the mind of man an image of his own righteousness, (§ 311,) may be considered of this demoniacal character ; as a disciple, misled by a false doctrine, may be figuratively spoken of as possessed of a demon. If, however, we choose to give to these *demons* the character of devils, it would be easy to show that the mixed system, when duly exposed, must necessarily appear a habitation of accusatory as well as of blasphemous elements. Such a construction would also correspond with the language of the prophet, (Jer. li. 37 :) “And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling-place for dragons, an astonishment, and a hissing, without an inhabitant,”—the dragon, or the hissing spirit of the prophecy, being equivalent to the demon or accusing spirit of the Apocalypse ; and the prophetic expression, without an inhabitant, showing the entire destitution of *shelter* peculiar to the system alluded to : its whole tendency being that of accusation and condemnation ; the demon of the Apocalypse, like the dumb spirit mentioned Mark ix. 22, bringing its subject into continual danger, as from fire or flood.

§ 403. ‘And the hold (prison, place of confinement) of every unclean spirit.’—Unclean, as the opposite of clean, is Levitically something *not* set apart or sanctified, as opposed to that which is set apart. The motive of a man’s conduct may be said to be the *spirit* by which he is actuated ; so an impure motive may be denominated an unclean or unsanctified spirit. The only pure motive of conduct, and the only motive set apart to the worship of God, is the love of God—the motive of gratitude. Opposite to this is every motive involving selfish or mercenary considerations. The desire of promoting one’s own interest and glory, even one’s own eternal interest and

eternal glory, is but a motive or spirit of covetousness ; all such motives, when the truth is manifested, will be proved to be found in the system represented by Babylon, as in a place of custody.

‘ And the cage’ (also place of confinement, the Greek term being the same in both cases,) ‘ of every unclean and hateful bird.’—The appellation *ὄρνις* (a carnivorous bird) is here employed as distinguished from *ὄρνις*, a domestic bird, (Rob. Lex. 515.) Birds of prey, the eagle, the vulture, the kite, &c., were held in abomination under the Levitical law. Those also which obtained their sustenance partly from the land and partly from the water, were an abomination ; as was likewise every flying, creeping thing, of a certain *mixed* character, (Lev. xi. 13–25.) The term *hateful* reminds us of the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, (Rev. ii. 6 and 15 ;) and the twofold nature of these abominable birds, suggests the conclusion that the unclean and odious elements here alluded to, are principles of a mixed character, such as we have before had occasion to notice as being hateful for their hypocrisy as well as for their tendency to lukewarmness :—elements of doctrine professedly advocating a dependence upon the redeeming work of Christ, but really inculcating the dependence of man upon his own works ; professing to seek the glory of God, but combining this motive with the desire of glorifying *self* ;—in effect going about to rob God of the glory belonging to him as the *only* Saviour, and this under the garb of a professed zeal for his honour and service. Motives or principles of this kind are unclean as well as hateful, because cleanness or purity is the opposite of mixture. No motive of conduct is set apart or holy in the sight of God, except that of love to him ; this love must be pure, unmixed, unadulterated by amalgamation with other motives.

The system represented by Babylon affords no such pure motive. Whatever its pretensions may be, when submitted to the test, its professed element of love to God will be manifested to be the opposite of a pure and grateful attachment. As it offers no shelter to the disciple from the wrath to come ; so likewise, in the nature of things, a pure motive can no more abide in it, than a human being can dwell with serpents and dragons. The system, when seen in its true light, must appear capable only of containing elements of a selfish, mercenary, or mixed character. Corresponding with this, appears to be the allusion in the prediction concerning Babylon, Jeremiah li. 62 : “ Then shalt thou say, O Lord, thou hast spoken against this place, to cut it off, that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but that it shall be desolate forever.”

§ 404. ‘ For (because) all nations have drunk,’ &c.—The word rendered *wrath* in this passage, is the same as that translated *fierceness*, Rev. xvi. 19. For the reason before assigned, (§ 332,) we prefer the term *vehemence*, as giving intensity to the expression, and according with the



antithesis implied, when contrasting the vehemence of unlawful gratification with the vehemence of divine anger.

The extraordinary annunciation of this angel is composed of two parts : the first exhibiting the miserable condition of Babylon, the last assigning the cause of this visitation. The wine of Babylon we have already defined (§ 385) as a supposed means of propitiation ; a mixture of man's pretensions of atonement, with a professed faith in the atonement of Christ. This mixture of the adulterated economy contaminates every doctrinal system, and every element of doctrine coming in contact with it. The only remedy for the evil is the utter destruction of that which causes it. Babylon once destroyed, her cup of abominations is destroyed with her ; the mixed system itself being overthrown, and its fallacies exhibited ; and among these fallacies, the most prominent (its pretended means of propitiation) being manifested in their true character, its deleterious influence ceases. The abomination, and hatefulness, and impurity of this false economy are exposed, especially because of the influence of its prominent element (a pretended atonement) upon doctrinal views and principles of doctrine generally.

Such we suppose to be the purport of the reason here assigned for the desolation of *the great city*. The terms nations and kings have been sufficiently noticed on other occasions, as figures of powers and leading principles of the earthly scheme of salvation. Whether we contemplate these nations and kings as those of the earth generally, or as those of the empire of Babylon, hyperbolically spoken of as the earth, does not appear to be material. The important subject of consideration presented by the passage is, that a mixed scheme of salvation, with its adulterated views of propitiation, such as are represented in this and in the preceding chapters, constitutes an insurmountable obstacle to the promulgation and right understanding of the truth of salvation by grace ; that this obstacle must be entirely removed by a just exposition of their character and tendency of these views, before the truth itself can have free course ; and perhaps we may add, before the main error of *self-dependence* can be directly attacked and overcome.

‘ And the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through abundance of her delicacies ;’ or, have become rich through the greatness of her luxury : *e virtute luxus ejus divites facti sunt*, (G. & L.)—The merchants are not supposed to be sharers in the delicacies, but the great luxury of the city, by its effect upon commerce, has been the means of enriching the merchants. These traders have thus a direct interest in sustaining the luxury, and in promoting the prosperity of this great emporium ; we may therefore consider them as constituent elements of the system, placing in a prominent point of view the mercenary character of the scheme itself. The merchants in contemplation are figures of mere calculating elements ; guided by no considerations but those of profit and loss. They find a pecu-

niary advantage in pandering for the vices, and in fostering the voluptuousness of this dissolute city. This is their motive of action. They may not have participated in drinking of the cup of Babylon, but they have assisted in furnishing the wine and the drugs of abomination with which it is prepared. They may not wear her costly array, but they have grown rich by furnishing its various materials. Perhaps they would have taken an equal interest in the glory of the New Jerusalem, if they could have equally enriched themselves by dealing in her fine linen, pure and clean. But as the holy city represents an economy of grace, all its enjoyments being matters of free *gift*, there is no room for trade or commerce in it. There, accordingly, such elements of calculation find no place; the economy of grace is neither sustained by, nor can it furnish a harbour to, *mercenary* principles of conduct.

These traders, however, are not spoken of here as otherwise punished than by the loss of their vocation. Babylon once destroyed, her commerce is at an end, and the merchants disappear, (Is. xlvii. 15,) which is all that the illustration requires. The mixed system being destroyed, there is no further room for the action of mercenary motives; accordingly, one of the reasons for the destruction of Babylon is, that she sustained and gave a lucrative employment to *merchants*. This, as a matter of political economy, we should say was rather a favourable feature in her character, and it is only as an illustration of a matter of doctrine that we can put a different construction upon it. The adulterated economy is destroyed, because it sustains and gives action to mercenary and selfish motives, and because these motives can be banished or expelled from the mind only by the *entire* destruction of the views of doctrine to which they are peculiar.

§ 405. This is the first direct intimation we have had in the Apocalypse of the commercial character of this great city, or of the peculiarly mercenary nature of the system represented by it; but we are to recollect that it is not till the fall of Babylon that her true character is developed; a peculiarity equally to be predicated of the fallacious system symbolized by her. Jeremiah speaks of the *covetousness* of Babylon; but he makes no allusion to her commerce in his last prediction concerning her, from which we have made several quotations. The same mystic feature, however, is apparently alluded to by different prophets under similar figures: as Is. xxiii. 8 and 11, "Who hath taken counsel against Tyre, the crowning city, *whose merchants are princes*, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth." "The Lord hath given a commandment against the *merchant-city*, to destroy the strongholds thereof." So also in the prophecy of the fall of Babylon, by the same prophet, Is. xlvii. 15, "Thus shall they be unto thee with whom thou hast laboured, even thy *merchants*, from thy youth: they shall wander every one to his quarter; none shall save thee." So in the pro-

phesy concerning Nineveh, Nahum iii. 16 : it was her reproach that she had *multiplied her merchants above the stars of heaven*. There seems likewise to be a typical peculiarity in the fact, that in the rebuilding of Jerusalem after the restoration, the *merchants* and *sellers of ware* were not allowed even to lodge about the wall of the city during the Sabbath, (Neh. xiii. 20, 21.) As if to point out to us the doctrinal peculiarity of the economy of grace, that when its truths are delivered from the bondage of the law, and are fully exhibited, it will be manifest that no mercenary motives can be harboured in that portion of its arrangements which affords its position of *rest*. So every mercenary principle or selfish motive is wholly inconsistent with a perfect confidence in the work of Christ,—an entire reliance upon the merit of his righteousness.

On the other hand, no allusion is made throughout this book of Revelation to the military or naval prowess of Babylon. Great as she is, her greatness consists in her riches, (the corruptible riches of self-righteousness.) Her *merchants* were the great men of the earth, (Rev. xviii. 25,) and so we may suppose her great men (rulers) were her merchants. Corresponding with this, the *chief* elements of the mixed system are its mercenary principles. These obtain great credence in the earthly construction of revelation ; as we find, in fact, mercenary motives and calculations of self-interest in the matter of religion to be most appreciated with mankind, and even to be esteemed the chief elements of the divine plan of government. A fallacy, the general currency of which corresponds with the deceptive characteristic scripturally imputed to the occupation of trading ; as it was said of Ephraim, “ He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand,” Hosea xii. 7.

Vs. 4, 5. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

Καὶ ἤκουσα ἄλλην φωνὴν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ λέγουσαν· ἐξέλθετε ἐξ αὐτῆς, ὁ λαός μου, ἵνα μὴ συγκοινωνήσῃτε ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις αὐτῆς καὶ ἐκ τῶν πλῃγῶν αὐτῆς ὅσα μὴ λάβετε· ὅτι ἐκολλήθυσαν αὐτῇ αἱ ἁμαρτίαι· ἔχει τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ ἐμνημόνευσεν ὁ Θεὸς τὰ ἁδικήματα αὐτῆς.

§ 406. ‘And I heard another voice,’ &c.—The first voice was that of the angel having great power, by whose glory the whole earth was lighted—declarative of a fact—something equivalent to a manifestation of Christ himself, (§ 401.) The second voice is that of warning, as of the voice of prophecy. The desolate state of Babylon is already exhibited : her final destruction is at hand ; the people addressed are supposed, like the family of Lot, to be still lingering amidst their ancient connections, while the execution of judgment is delayed only for their departure ; as the impending



deluge was withheld till after the entrance of Noah and his family into the ark.

‘Come out of her, my people,’ &c.—This favoured class probably bear the same relation to Babylon that the one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed ones bear to the *earth*; different figures representing the same truth. The system symbolized by Babylon is a confused mixture, but in this mixture there are some elements of true doctrine. So long as these remain connected with principles of error, their whole character is changed, perverted; and in that state their destruction must be as necessarily called for as that of the errors themselves: brought out, they are like the grain separated from the chaff, or like the wheat separated from the tares.

‘That ye be not partakers of her sins.’—As the Babylon in contemplation is not literally a city, so neither are the people called out from her literally human beings, nor are the sins of Babylon alluded to literally acts of immorality, although they may be figuratively spoken of as such. The primitive signification of the term translated *sins* (ἁμαρτία) is a missing or mistaking of the object aimed at; as the adjective ἁμαρτίστος is applicable to the state of error peculiar to the mind of an insane person, (Donnegan.) the secondary meaning is that of a fault, or sin. We must judge of the meaning by the occasion upon which the word is used: if it be applied to the conduct of a rational being, the signification may be that of *sin* in the ordinary sense of the term; but if applied to the character and tendency of a doctrinal system, it may signify error in matters of faith. The truths of the economy of grace are accordingly to be discriminated and separated from the errors of the mixed system, with which they have become commingled, and this in order to prevent them from sharing in the common destruction.

The figure immediately in contemplation may be that of the Jews, while in a state of captivity in Babylon. The time of their deliverance is now at hand, their confinement hitherto having arisen out of circumstances not here alluded to; the admonition very closely resembling that of the prophet, (Jer. li. 6,) “Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the Lord’s vengeance; he will render unto her a recompense.” We might suppose, by way of illustration, the people of God to have been permitted to remain in captivity with the view of converting their captors, by bringing them to the knowledge and worship of the true God. The insane proneness of the Babylonians to idolatry, however, is so great, that, instead of being thus changed, it is to be apprehended that they will change or pervert the views of the captives under their influence. The season of forbearance is now therefore at an end: Babylon must be destroyed, and her captives must be released.

‘That ye receive not,’ &c.—The principal plague or blow prospectively

in contemplation is that of *fire*, as appears from the remainder of the chapter, (the action of the revealed word upon every element of error.) But we may suppose this second voice to have been uttered contemporaneously with the previous visitations. The call to the truths of the gospel to come out of the mixed system, is as much to prevent them from being perverted by association with foul and hateful principles, as to prevent their entire destruction.

The admonition corresponds with that of the apostle Paul, (2 Cor. vi. 17,) “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean (thing);”—this unclean thing, in the language of the apostle, being the same element of selfishness and mercenary consideration as that for which the mixed system of Babylon is peculiar; the *rudiments* of the world, spoken of Col. ii. 20, being apparently of a similar character.

§ 407. ‘For her sins have reached unto the heavens.’—Some Greek editions employ here the verb ἀκολουθέω, which our common version has rendered in this place by the English verb *reach*, although elsewhere in the Apocalypse it is translated *follow*. The Greek edition we have adopted in this work, however, employs the word ἐκολλήθησας, from the verb κολλάω, signifying the fastening upon, or cleaving, or joining of one thing to another; as Luke xv. 15, ἐκολλήθη ἐν τῶν πολιτῶν, *ν.τ.λ.*, He *joined* himself to a citizen of that country. So, Acts ix. 26, Paul assayed to *join* himself to the disciples after his conversion, but they were afraid of him; and Acts x. 28, Peter says to Cornelius, Ye know that it is an unlawful thing for a Jew to *keep company*; and 1 Cor. vi. 16, 17, the term is employed to express even that intimacy of union which is a figure of *identity*—He that is *joined* to the Lord is one spirit.

The errors of Babylon have fastened upon or joined themselves to the very heaven—to the revelation of truth itself, *agglutinata sunt ejus peccata ad cælum*, (G. & L.) As we might say, the errors of this mixed system have arrived at such an excess of perversion, that they have identified themselves even with the whole language of the Scriptures, affecting the entire construction of the sacred volume; the spiritual heaven or heavens being a display of the scheme of divine government in spiritual things, as the physical heavens afford an exhibition of divine power and wisdom in physical things, (§ 115.) The presumption of the errors of this system (Babylon) corresponds with that of its sustaining principle (self) the beast; the blasphemous character of both being expressed in the language of Lucifer, (Is. xiv. 3,) quoted on a former occasion; as it is also symbolized by the presumptuous attempt of the ancient inhabitants of the land of Shinar to perpetuate their own name and glory, by building a city and a tower whose top should reach unto heaven.

‘And God hath remembered her iniquities;’ or, God hath called to mind her acts of injustice.—We have to make the same remark with respect to this term *iniquities* (ἀδικήματα) as we have made with regard to that of *sins*. The meaning depends upon the manner and the occasion upon which it is used. If applied to the conduct of a human being, it is to be understood literally, as of injuries or offences; if applied to a system, it must be taken for something the opposite of justice or of justification, (§ 174.) Apparently these ἀδικήματα of Babylon, are opposites of the δικαιώματα, judgments or justifications of the Lord, (Rev. xv. 4, § 352.) The tendency of the mixed system is to operate against justification through the imputed righteousness of Christ. Its principles, therefore, are the opposites of justification: or, if we consider the mixed system as offering other means of justification, such as a composition of the merits of man with those of his Saviour, these means are her acts of injustice. The noun ἀδικήμα occurs in two other places only of the New Testament, Acts xviii. 14, and xxiv. 20, where it is employed in the singular to express any act of injustice cognizable to human laws. The acts of injustice of the apocalyptic Babylon, if exercised towards God, consist in her substitution of false means of salvation for the true *means*, thereby robbing him of the glory due to his name. If these acts be exercised towards man, they must consist in the same substitution of false means for the true, thereby operating against the plan of justification by grace, or tending so to do. In either case, these *iniquities* of Babylon are of the same character as her cup of abominations; as indeed they accord with the view we have presented of all the elements of this mixed system.

Vs. 6, 7. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

Ἀπόδοτε αὐτῇ, ὡς καὶ αὐτὴ ἀπέδωκε, καὶ διπλώσατε αὐτῇ διπλῶ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῆς· ἐν τῷ ποτηρίῳ, ᾧ ἐκέρασε, κεράσατε αὐτῇ διπλοῦν· ὅσα ἐδόξασεν ἑαυτὴν καὶ ἐστρηνίασε, τοσοῦτον δότε αὐτῇ βασανισμὸν καὶ πένθος, ὅτι ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῆς λέγει· κάθ' ἡμαι βασίλισσα, καὶ χήρα οὐκ εἰμί, καὶ πένθος οὐ μὴ ἴδω·

§ 408. ‘Reward her even as she rewarded you.’\*—As we have suggested, on a former occasion, (§ 162,) it would be very extraordinary if language like this were to be taken literally; even if addressed to Christian martyrs in times of bitterest persecution. Μηδενὲ κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἀποδιδόν-τες—“Reward no one evil for evil,” is the express instruction of the

\* The word translated *you* is not found in all editions of the Greek: without it the reading would be, “Reward her as she has rewarded;” that is, upon the principle of reward that she has assumed, so recompense her—corresponding with the construction we have adopted.



gospel, Rom. xii. 17. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you," is the exhortation of the Son of God to all his followers, Matt. v. 44. It is even the language of the law, which requires every subject of the law to be perfect, as He is perfect who maketh his sun to shine upon the just and upon the unjust.

There is in the nature of things an unavoidable reaction of truth, when manifested upon the elements of falsehood. There is a righteous retribution with which all false doctrine must be visited. This retribution is visited through the instrumentality of opposite truths. Such reaction and such retribution we suppose to be what is alluded to under the figurative language of this vindictive exhortation. Even this avenging recompense, however, is the work of God, and not of man; as it is said, Rom. xii. 19, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord;" and, as it is said by the prophet, in reference to this same Babylon, "Shout against her round about:" "her foundations are fallen, her walls are thrown down; for it is the vengeance of the LORD: take vengeance upon her; as she hath done, do unto her; . . . for she hath been proud against the Lord." . . . "Behold, I am against thee, O thou most proud, saith the Lord God of Hosts; for thy day is come, the time that I will visit thee: and the most proud shall stumble and fall, and none shall raise him up; and I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it shall devour all round about him," (Jer. li. 14, 15, 31, 32.)

A prominent feature in the character of the mixed system is its pride; a pride pretending to give the Most High an equivalent of human merit, in exchange for the benefit of eternal life; a pride disdaining to be under obligations to God as the only Redeemer and Saviour. The fall or humiliation of Babylon is a retributive visitation of this pride—she is rewarded *in kind*. So, as another feature of the system is its mercenary character, the judgment corresponds with it. Babylon is repaid or recompensed by the standard of her own adoption; with the same measure that she meted to others, it is measured to her again. As it was said to the unprofitable servant, "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee." She has adopted the rule of *law*—that rule of law is now applied to her conduct; she depended upon her works—she is visited according to her works.

'Double unto her double,' &c.—We suppose this double recompense to be the retribution of a double transgression. The sinner in the sight of God has justly deserved eternal punishment for his transgression of the law; if, in addition to this, he goes about to work out a propitiation of his own, he deserves an equal punishment for his rejection of the gospel. Babylon is guilty of this double transgression; the retribution is therefore to be doubled, and this upon her own principles—the standard of her own mercenary calculations of profit and loss.

‘In the cup which she has filled,’ &c.—The cup, as we have seen, is a cup of abominations—a mixture or adulteration of pretended human means of atonement with those of Christ. The effect of the retribution shows such a pretension on the part of the sinner to be a doubling of his guilt. In addition to his sin, his pretended atonement is an abomination; like the multitude of sacrifices and the vain oblations spoken of by the prophet, (Is. i. 10–13.) It is the adding of sin to sin; *the drawing of iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart-rope*, (Is. v. 18.)

§ 409. ‘How much she hath glorified herself,’ &c.—The harlot has ostentatiously displayed her gaudy apparel; Babylon has boasted of her pretended riches. The mixed system has fostered the pride of man in its pretensions of human merit. Babylon has lived deliciously, (luxuriously,) as those “at ease in Zion; stretching themselves on beds of ivory, and reposing upon their couches,” (Amos vi. 1–4.) She has reposed upon her own imaginary merits—resting in the security of her own means of propitiation. Just in proportion to this vainglory and misplaced confidence, the madness and folly of this mixed system will be exhibited; as it is said, Prov. i. 32, according to the margin, “The *ease* of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.”

‘So much *torment* and sorrow give her.’—So much is she to be subjected to *trial* as on the rack, as if to extort the truth by confession, (§ 210.) The greater the pretensions of the false system, so much more severely it is to be tried, that its fallacies may be exposed, and its real destitution of all means of comfort, or consolation, or *rest*, exhibited.

‘For (because) she saith in her heart,’ &c.—The pride of Babylon is a pride of *the heart*; and not only this, “she has been proud against the Lord.” Like the *man of sin*, she exalts herself in opposition to Jehovah.

‘I sit a queen.’—Not that Babylon professes to share the throne with a royal partner; on the contrary, she sits a queen, as a *substitute* for a king—and as an opposite, even a competitor of the King of kings. She saith in heart, no doubt, If I am not a king I am equal to a king—I am a sovereign.

‘I am no widow;’—or, as the Greek *χήρα*, feminine of *χῆρος*, may be rendered, (Donnegan,) I am not *bereft*, I am not desolate. Babylon does not pretend to be a legitimate wife; still less, the wife of the Lamb. She assumes to be independent—she is not in a state of bereavement—not because she has a husband, but because she professes neither to depend upon, nor to desire a husband. The mixed plan of salvation is something which virtually professes to make man his own redeemer. The language of inspiration, “Thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of hosts is his name,” (Is. liv. 5,) has nothing in common with the system of Babylon.

‘I shall see no sorrow.’—As Babylon is sensible of no bereavement in the loss of a husband, so she flatters herself with suffering no sorrow as from

the loss of children. She prides herself upon her independence, and supposes herself lifted up above the causes of sorrow incident to created beings. Her language is that of self-confidence, self-sufficiency, and self-righteousness, corresponding with the tone imputed to her, (Is. xlvii. 7-9;) the consequence of this presumption, as then predicted, being exemplified in the picture of destruction now presented in the Apocalypse: "And thou saidst I shall be a lady forever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it. Therefore, hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thy heart, *I am*,\* and none else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: but these two things shall come to thee in a moment, *in one day*, the loss of children and widowhood; they shall come upon thee in their perfection, for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments."

V. S. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong (is) the Lord God who judgeth her.

διὰ τοῦτο ἐν μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ ἔξουσιν αἱ πληγαὶ αὐτῆς, θάνατος καὶ πένθος καὶ λιμός, καὶ ἐν πύρρι κατακαυθήσεται, ὅτι ισχυρὸς κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ κρίνων αὐτήν.

§ 410. 'Therefore shall her plagues come *in one day*;'—or, all at once, as it is expressed by the prophet in the passage just quoted, *in a moment, in one day*; corresponding in this respect with the change spoken of by Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 52, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye."

'Death, and mourning, and famine.'—From the order of this enumeration, as compared with that of the preceding verse, we may consider *death* to be put here as an opposite of *sitting a queen*; *mourning* as the opposite of *being no widow*; and *famine* as an opposite of *seeing no sorrow*. Even as a figure we cannot take death, in a natural sense, as applying to Babylon herself, for then it could not be followed by the other woes or plagues; but if we contemplate Babylon as a sovereign, the death may be that of her subjects, or if as a city, it may be that of its inhabitants. A sovereign deprived of his subjects, is divested of his power and glory; and a city without its inhabitants, is equally divested of its resources. As we suppose the phrase *I am no widow* to express a boast of exemption from *bereavement* generally, whether of husband or of children; so we suppose the opposite mourning to apply to the sense of destitution in both these particulars: *mourning* the loss of all—the two things mentioned by the prophet, the loss of children and widowhood. And as the expression, "I shall see no sorrow," is equivalent to the vain assertion, I shall suffer no want, so the opposite of this is famine, or a destitution, even of the necessities of life;

\* This expression is not merely one of egotism; it is something equivalent to a blasphemous assumption of divine sovereignty.



corresponding with the call of the Lord's vengeance, Jer. l. 15, 16: "As she hath done, do unto her. Cut off the sower from Babylon, and him that handleth the sickle in the time of harvest."

In a more spiritual sense, we consider *death* a manifest state of condemnation under the law; not a death *in* Christ, but a death *out* of Christ. Mourning, as of the loss of children, or of a state of widowhood, we take to be a figure of entire want of merit or righteousness, a manifest destitution of those merits which may be spoken of as the offspring of a union with Christ. So the famine must represent a like manifestation of the absence of every element capable of securing salvation or eternal life.

These three figures correspond in their spiritual meaning with the desolation, and nakedness, and consumption of the flesh of the harlot, described in the preceding chapter; the effect of famine and the loss of flesh in these illustrations both indicating a manifestation of unworthiness, elsewhere denominated a *leanness of the soul*. This manifestation visits as a judgment the proud boasting of self-dependence; as it was said of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, Is. x. 15, 16: "Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? . . . as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up . . . therefore shall the Lord of hosts send among his fat ones *leanness*; and under his glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of fire."

'And she shall be utterly burned with fire.'—This visitation corresponds with the final action of the ten horns upon the harlot, as it was predicted of them that they should "burn her with fire." We conclude, from this coincidence, that the *epoch* at which we have arrived in this chapter is identic with that of the description in the last chapter; the difference being only in the figure. In the one case, the destruction of Babylon is pictured as that of a human being, and in the other as that of a city. In the first instance, as if to spare the reader or spectator the dreadful particulars of the burning alive of an individual, the figure is changed, and the particulars of the burning of a magnificent city are given in the place of it. Both figures alike apply to the destruction of a mixed doctrinal system, by the agency of the revealed word of God; which, as we have repeatedly noticed, is scripturally compared to a *fire*.

'For strong is the Lord God who judgeth her;' or, *mighty* is the Lord. The term in the Greek, *ισχυρός*, is the same as that immediately afterwards applied to Babylon—"that mighty city," (in human estimation.) If Babylon be accounted mighty by men, God is really mighty: as it is said, 1 Cor. i. 25, 'Even the weakness of God is stronger [more mighty] than man.' For this reason, besides the other blows inflicted upon her, she is utterly consumed or burned up.

Strictly speaking, it is for God to judge, and to condemn, and to execute his own sentence of condemnation ; but the Greek verb (*κρίνω*) employed here, is applicable more especially to the act of discrimination ; and, as far as the fate of a system of doctrines is concerned, the act of discrimination is the execution of a judgment. No sooner is that which is false discriminated from that which is true, than the first is utterly destroyed ; the destruction of error consisting in its detection and exhibition. If according to a man's system of faith, his real motive of conduct be to serve himself instead of serving God, as he pretends it to be, no sooner is the just discrimination made between that which constitutes such service and that which is of an opposite character, than the theory or system itself, whence the error emanates, is destroyed. The discerning between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not, is accordingly detailed by the prophet as a consequence of the coming of the day which is to burn as an oven, which 'shall burn up those that do wickedly as stubble, leaving them neither root nor branch,' (Mal. iii. 18, and iv. 1.)

## THE CONFLAGRATION.

Vs. 9, 10. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city ! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

Καὶ ῥαυνοῦνται ἑαυτὸν κόποῦνται ἐπὶ μὲν τῇ οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς, οἱ μετ' αὐτῆς πορνεύσαντες καὶ στηγνιάσαντες, ὅταν βλέπωσι τὸν καπνὸν τῆς πυρώσεως αὐτῆς, ἀπὸ μακρόθεν· ἐστηκότες διὰ τὸν φόβον τοῦ βασιλισμοῦ αὐτῆς, λέγοντες· οὐαὶ, οὐαὶ, ἡ πέλις ἡ μεγάλη, Βαβυλὼν ἡ πόλις ἡ ἰσχυρά, ὅτι μιᾷ ὥρᾳ ἥλθεν ἡ κρίσις σου.

§ 411. 'And the kings of the earth,' &c.—There is a peculiar license in this imagery, which in a human composition would be considered altogether unwarrantable. Babylon is spoken of expressly as a city, while those alluded to as having maintained illicit connection with her are mentioned, not as other cities, or as the inhabitants of other cities, but as certain sovereigns of various countries of the earth ; the whole figure being of such a character as entirely to preclude the possibility of a literal construction. We can neither suppose Babylon to be literally a city or a kingdom, nor the kings literally kings. Such may in effect be the design of this anomaly—to create a *bar* to the application of the illustration to any personal or political object.

These kings of the earth we have before supposed to be leading principles of what we term the earthly system ; perhaps the same as the seven heads (seven kings) of the beast, (§ 391.) They are leading principles

which have sustained the mixed system—being themselves sustained by the element of *self*. The living deliciously of these kings we suppose to be a figure of the false position of *rest* furnished by the mixed system; an opposite of the true position found in *Christ*. To them the loss of Babylon is the loss of this *rest*. They are no longer able, through the instrumentality of amalgamated views of doctrine, to hold forth the promise of a *position* indispensable both to the safety and to the eternal enjoyment of the disciple.

‘Bewail her, and lament for her,’ (κλαίονται καὶ κόρονται,)—crying and cutting themselves, after the manner of the priests of Baal;—these chief principles perhaps standing, in relation to the mixed system of doctrine, as the priests of Baal stood to their idol—sustaining his worship for their own private advantage and enjoyment.

‘When they see the smoke of her burning;’ that is, when the evidence of her being destroyed is exhibited.

‘Standing afar off for the fear of her torment;’ or rather, for fear of her *torture*—for fear of undergoing the same trial (as by fire) to which she is exposed—an intimation that, if brought to the same test, their fate must be the same. It does not appear that they are involved in precisely the same destruction; but, notwithstanding this, we find their judgment lingered not, (2 Peter iii. 13.) They escape the fire, but they afterwards fall by the edge of the sword, as we learn from the conclusion of the next chapter.

‘For in one hour,’ &c.—The lamentation is not merely over the fall of Babylon, but that it should take place so suddenly—a peculiarity we find noticed alike by all of the three classes of mourners described in the chapter.

Vs. 11–14. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more; the merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusteth after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

Καὶ οἱ ἔμποροι τῆς γῆς κλαίονσι καὶ πενθοῦσιν ἐπ’ αὐτῇ, ὅτι τὸν γόμον αὐτῶν οὐδεὶς ἀγοράζει οὐκέτι· γόμον χρυσοῦ καὶ ἀργύρου, καὶ λίθου τιμίου καὶ μαργαρίτου, καὶ βυσσίνου καὶ πορφύρας, καὶ σιρκίου καὶ κοκκίνου, καὶ πᾶν ξύλον θύϊνον καὶ πᾶν σκεῦος ἐλεφάντινον, καὶ πᾶν σκεῦος ἐκ ξύλου τιμιωτάτου καὶ χαλκοῦ καὶ σιδήρου καὶ μαρμάρου, καὶ κινύρομον καὶ ἄμωμον, καὶ θυμιάματα καὶ μύρον καὶ λίβανον, καὶ οἶνον καὶ ἔλαιον, καὶ σμιῖδωλιν καὶ σίτον, καὶ κτήνη καὶ πρόβατα, καὶ ἵππων καὶ ὄνων καὶ σωματίων, καὶ ψυχῆς ἀνθρώπων. Καὶ ἡ ὁπώρα τῆς ἐπιθυμίας τῆς ψυχῆς σου ἀπῆλθεν ἀπὸ σοῦ, καὶ πάντα τὰ λιπαρὰ καὶ τὰ λαμπρὰ ἀπώλετο ἀπὸ σοῦ, καὶ οὐκέτι οὐ μὴ εὐρήσῃς αὐτά.

§ 412. ‘And the merchants,’ &c.—We have already contemplated these merchants as representing principles of the mercenary character,



interested in sustaining the mixed economy, because they are themselves sustained by it; the earth representing the basis of man's position by nature, dependent for the means of life upon his own labour: these mercenary elements we suppose to be peculiar to this earthly *basis*. They are elements of doctrine belonging to a system of self-dependence, suggesting to the disciple no motives of conduct except such as result from a calculation of profit or loss—principles wholly inconsistent with a system of grace—principles to be as thoroughly expurgated from the disciple's views of faith, as the original inhabitants of Canaan were to have been driven out to give place to the favoured people of God.

The appellation *Canaan* is said to signify a *merchant* or *trader*. The Canaanites were to have been driven out of the promised land, but certain of them, as we have noticed, were left to *try* the people. So, in human views of God's plan of redemption, certain mercenary principles appear to have been suffered to remain to *try* the disciple. But as the Israelites were led away by the ancient inhabitants of Canaan to worship idols, so these mercenary principles appear to have predominated in the minds of Christians, especially in sustaining their views of a mixed plan of redemption. Without such a mixed system these principles cannot be sustained. The merchants of the earth therefore weep and mourn over the fall of Babylon.

'For no one buyeth their merchandise any more.'—The illustration is the more happy, as it is a matter of experience in the operations of trade, that the seller is dependent upon the buyer rather than the buyer upon the seller. If these merchants had resorted to Babylon principally to obtain certain articles of luxury to be disposed of in other countries, the loss of her would not have been so important; they might have procured the same articles elsewhere, or have substituted others for them; but here the misfortune is, that the *consumer* is destroyed—the chief consumer of the earth, not only a city but an empire, and one distinguished for its immense consumption of luxuries as well as of necessities of every description. These traders are supposed to be furnished with their merchandise; their immense stocks on hand. As citizens, they would willingly forfeit their political and personal liberties to obtain a market for their goods. Babylon was to them the god of their idolatry; but now their occupation is gone—no one buyeth their merchandise any more. They weep and mourn, not from sympathy for the sufferers by this fearful conflagration, but because their own pecuniary interests are most deeply affected by it. So we may say of the mercenary principles sustaining and sustained by the mixed system in contemplation, they are of a character altogether selfish; a pure motive of gratitude or love to God, or of zeal for his glory, forms no part of their composition.

'The merchandise of gold,' &c., &c.—Here follows an enumeration of the different kinds of merchandise furnished by these traders, of which Baby-

lon was the consumer. Every particular, no doubt, might be enlarged upon, illustrating by a variety of figures the same general truths: the articles of which gold and silver are the materials representing earthly riches—opposites of the true riches, and of the gold tried in the fire: precious stones and pearls—opposites of *the stone*, elect, precious, and of *the pearl* of great price;—the materials of clothing representing opposites of the garments of salvation, and of the robe of righteousness; the fine linen purchased of the merchants being something different from the fine linen, pure and white, which is *the righteousness of the saints*. The purple and silk and scarlet might have been employed in the tabernacle in the wilderness, under the legal dispensation, but they are not called for in the heavenly tabernacle. Under the legal dispensation, all that man could furnish was required, and this all was insufficient. The mixed system retains the requisitions of the law—even its temple is a house of merchandise. Accordingly we may suppose these vessels of ivory and precious wood, these spices, and odours, and incense, to be the materials of temple service—elements of divine worship; opposites of the one sacrifice of propitiation, and the one *reasonable sacrifice* of thank-offering peculiar to the Christian system. So the provisions of wheat, wine, oil, &c., may be taken as opposites of the bread of life, of the new wine of the Saviour's cup, and of the oil of *his* holiness or sanctification. As the beasts and sheep, or rather *cattle* and sheep, *κτὴν καὶ πρόβατα*, constitute both articles of food and elements of sacrifice, they may have their opposites in the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and in the spiritual flesh or righteousness of Christ, the true bread of eternal life. Horses and chariots are means of safety and protection—figures of supposed means of salvation. Slaves and souls of men, or more strictly bodies and souls of men, (*σωμάτων καὶ ψυχὰς ἀνθρώπων*,)—the body and soul of the slave constituting one article of merchandise,—represent elements of bondage of every grade. The language here employed being that of inspiration, we have no doubt that every term here employed has its mate, (Is. xxxiv. 16;) but an exact analysis would require more space than can be now allotted to it. Besides, we have already had occasion to notice the spiritual signification of many of these particulars elsewhere.

‘And the fruits that thy soul lusteth after,’ &c.; or, more exactly, And the autumn or the autumnal fruits of the desires of thy soul are departed from thee; (*ἡ ὥρα τῆς ἐπιθυμίας τῆς ψυχῆς σου*;) as if at the very moment when Babylon was about to obtain the fruit of her desires, it was taken from her.

‘And all things which were dainty and goodly,’ or, All things *sumptuous* and *splendid*, (*καὶ λιπαρὰ καὶ τὰ λαμπρά*,) all gratifications of appetite and vanity, are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. A commercial emporium only partially destroyed may revive again; but Baby-

lon is utterly burned with fire. She is never to be resuscitated. The mixed system in contemplation, once exposed by a just application of revealed truth, can never again obtain credence.

Vs. 15, 16. The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off, for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas, alas! that great city that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought.

Οἱ ἔμποροι τούτων, οἱ πλουτίσαντες ἀπ' αὐτῆς, ἀπὸ μαζρόθεν στήσονται διὰ τὸν φόβον τοῦ βασιτισμοῦ αὐτῆς, κλαίοντες καὶ πενθοῦντες, λέγοντες· οὐαί, οὐαί, ἡ πόλις ἡ μεγάλη, ἡ περιβεβλημένη βύσσινον καὶ πορφύρου καὶ κόκκινον καὶ κεχρυσωμένη χρυσίῳ καὶ λίθῳ τιμῷ καὶ μαργαρίταις, ὅτι μᾶ ὥρα ἡρημώθη ὁ τοσούτος πλοῦτος.

§ 413. 'The merchants of these things which were made rich,' &c.—

Our remarks upon the eleventh verse of this chapter, have already anticipated the observations to be made here. Mercenary principles depend for their currency, and for their appreciation in the sight of men, upon the legal and upon the mixed system. The legal system we suppose to be out of the question; and if it were not, the law strictly put in force, as illustrated by the action of the ten horns upon the harlot, (§ 397,) would not admit of a mercenary or selfish principle in the sight of God; for the law applies to the heart and to the motive, as well as to the outward conduct. Mercenary principles, therefore, in effect depend altogether upon the mixed system. As if the professing Christian, while he expressly repudiates the idea of receiving eternal life as a compensation for his faithful services, still supposed the design of the economy of grace to be that of placing him in a position in which he may consider the favour of God a reward for his good conduct. Eternal life he admits to be the gift of God, and death to be the wages of sin; but he argues, 'Eternal life having been given me, I am now to receive a reward for the duties I perform.' Under this apprehension, whatever his professions may be of unworthiness and of love to his Redeemer, he is actuated by mercenary principles, and these principles depend upon his mixed system of faith. His chief discrimination between the law and the gospel seems to be, that whereas the first demands a purity of motive as well as an exactness of service to escape punishment alone, the last is not so rigid in either of these respects; and not only so, under the gospel dispensation, however imperfect his services, and however tainted with selfishness his motives, he may now expect a reward *pro rata* for every act of obedience. The apprehension of the advocate of these views appears to be, that the motive of *gratitude for eternal salvation* is not sufficient; and that accordingly the prospect of some specific reward must be held out to stimulate the disciple to obedience.

Mercenary principles depend upon the reputation of the mixed system, as the artificers of Ephesus depended upon the credit of the great



goddess Diana. As it was said by Demetrius, "Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth," (Acts xix. 25.) If the temple of Diana came to be despised, the craftsmen lost their employment. In like manner we sometimes find subverted views of gospel doctrine sustained, lest the avocations of those interested in their support should *come to nought*.

'Alas! alas! that great city that was clothed,' &c.—The language is that of astonishment as well as of regret, that a city so important, whose inhabitants were so richly clad, and were in possession of such great wealth, should be so suddenly destroyed. The mixed system of faith holds out the promise that all dependent upon it are clothed with garments of salvation, obtained by their own works, and robes of righteousness of their own fabric, or at least of their own ornamenting. An astonishment, like that of these merchants, may pervade the breast of the disciple, who has been laboring to establish a claim of reward for his own faithful services, as he esteems them, when he finds that his garments are moth-eaten, and his gold and his silver cankered. Light is thrown in upon his mind, he perceives his folly, but he cannot be otherwise than astonished that so plausible a theory of faith should be thus *suddenly* demolished.

Vs. 17-19. And every ship-master, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What (city is) like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

Καὶ πᾶς κυβερνήτης καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἐπὶ τόπον πλέων, καὶ ναῦται καὶ ὅσοι τὴν θάλασσαν ἐργάζονται, ἀπὸ μακρόθεν ἔστησαν, καὶ ἔκραζον βλέποντες τὸν καπνὸν τῆς πυρώσεως αὐτῆς, λέγοντες· τίς ὁμοία τῇ πόλει τῇ μεγάλῃ; Καὶ ἔβαλον χοῦν ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτῶν, καὶ ἔκραζον κλαίοντες καὶ πενθοῦντες, λέγοντες· οὐαὶ, οὐαὶ, ἡ πόλις ἡ μεγάλη, ἐν ᾗ ἐπλούτησαν πάντες οἱ ἔχοντες τὰ πλοῖα ἐν τῇ θαλάσσῃ ἐκ τῆς τιμιότητος αὐτῆς, ὅτι μιᾷ ὥρᾳ ἡρημώθη.

§ 414. 'And every ship-master,' &c.; or, And every pilot, and every one sailing from place to place, and the sailors, and as many as were engaged in maritime commerce, (ὅσοι τὴν θάλασσαν ἐργάζονται.)—The enumeration may be fairly said to comprehend the whole shipping interest of the earth; the ship-master and supercargo, or travelling merchant, being in ancient times part owners of their vessels.

We may suppose these to represent something of an auxiliary class of mercenary principles. The merchant is interested in Babylon directly by the sale or exchange of his commodities; those connected with shipping are interested, because they are the instruments of effecting this exchange, and are compensated for it by the merchants. They represent mercenary principles, although somewhat of a different grade: the ship-master labours for his freight, the supercargo for his commission, the sailor for his wages, the ship-mechanic for his pay, and the merchant for his expected profit. The motive

is the same with all, and the interest of all is the same in sustaining the prosperity of a country, upon the commerce of which they depend even for their means of life. Allusions to similar auxiliary principles of a mercenary character appear to be made by the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel, in their mention of the ships of Tarshish, Tyre, Sidon, and even of Chaldea; as it is said, Is. xliii. 14, "Thus saith the Lord your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships." The picture of the desolation of Tyre, especially in her maritime relations, as given by the prophet Ezekiel, bears so strong a resemblance to the account we have of Babylon now under consideration, that we cannot but be confirmed in the belief that the Tyre of one prophet is the Babylon of another, and that both have a like reference to the *great city* of the Apocalypse: Ezek. xxvii 12-36.

'And they cried when they saw,' &c.—Our English version omits the particular that these ship-masters, &c., *stood afar off*, but the Greek includes it. They are not, however, said to stand off from *fear of her torments*, as is said of the kings and merchants. Their first sentiment seems to be that of surprise, that so great a city should meet such a fate; their feeling is next that of sorrow, disappointment, and regret. "They cast dust upon their heads," &c., as it was said of Tyre: "The suburbs shall shake at the sound of the cry of the pilots [ship-masters]. And all that handle the oar, the mariners, and all the pilots of the sea, shall come down from their ships, they shall stand upon the land; and shall cause their voice to be heard against thee, and shall cry bitterly, and shall cast dust upon their heads; they shall wallow themselves in the ashes," &c.

'And they cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas! alas! that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships.'—The mourners now call to mind their own interest, as navigators, ship-owners, &c., in this scene of desolation; they mourn the loss of that commerce through the instrumentality of which they themselves became rich.

There is something strikingly *in keeping* in the lamentations of these three classes of spectators. The kings lament the loss of pleasure, and are astonished that so powerful a city should be destroyed so suddenly; the merchants lament the loss of a most important customer for their wares, and wonder that so wealthy a city should be ruined in so short a space of time; while the seafaring class, regretting the loss of freights for their ships, are equally astonished that a city making others so rich should herself so suddenly come to nought.

The *treble* repetition of the remark, that all this desolation of Babylon comes upon her in one hour, is to be particularly noticed. The mixed system, like an opulent city, may have been small in its origin: its accumu-

lation of power and advancement in human estimation has been gradual ; but its destruction, whenever it takes place, is to be sudden, and speedily accomplished : corresponding apparently with all that is said in Scripture of the coming of the day of the Lord ; and applicable, in the case of the individual, to the mental change taking place when he discerns the difference of his position *in* Christ and *out* of Christ, and still more applicable to the change taking place in his views on his transition into another state of existence. Besides this, we trust it also applies to a general change in the views of the Christian community, at a period not far distant, scripturally spoken of as a period when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the deep, (Heb. ii. 14 ; Is. xi. 9.)

V. 20. Rejoice over her, (thou) heaven, and (ye) holy apostles and prophets ; for God hath avenged you on her.

Εὐφραίνου ἐν αὐτῇ, οὐρανέ, καὶ οἱ ἅγιοι καὶ οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ προφῆται, ὅτι ἔκρινεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ κρίμα ὑμῶν ἐξ αὐτῆς.

§ 415. ‘ Rejoice,’ &c.—The apostle, we are to bear in mind, has not himself witnessed this conflagration of Babylon, nor has he heard himself the lamentations of the kings, merchants, and mariners, but the voice spoken of in the fourth verse of the chapter tells him how these things shall be ; and the same voice apparently now apostrophizes the holy apostles and prophets, calling upon them to rejoice over Babylon, for the vengeance executed by God upon her on their account. This voice can be no other than that of Jesus himself, as we may infer from the whole purport of the fourth and fifth verses. Can we suppose that he who wept over Jerusalem, (Luke xix. 41–44,) notwithstanding all her rebellion, would, in any thing like a literal sense, call upon his apostles and prophets to rejoice over the desolation of a city, the character and fate of which so much resembles that over which he mourned ?

There is a difference here in some of the Greek editions. According to those followed by our common version the term *holy* is applied to apostles and prophets ; according to others, as in the text we have adopted, it forms a distinct class—holy ones, or saints. This difference is not material according to our mode of interpretation ; as we consider saints, apostles, and prophets, figurative appellations of elements of a scheme or exhibition of a scheme of divine government spoken of as the heaven ; apostles, prophets, and saints, bearing the same relation to the figurative heaven as the *inhabitants* of the earth bear to the earth or to the world. The rejoicing called for, is not that of a class or classes of human beings over the downfall of a city, but it is the rejoicing of certain classes of truths over the downfall of a system of error : these holy apostles and prophets, with their company of saints, constituting the band of sealed ones—elements of scriptural revelation—elsewhere represented as the one hundred and forty-four thousand ;—heaven, as we have



supposed, being the display of the wonders of divine administration in spiritual things, corresponding with the display of natural wonders afforded by the physical heaven. As the prophets and apostles were literally the instruments of revealing these spiritual wonders, so they are appropriately employed as figures of the elements of that revelation ;—as if it were said, laying aside the figure, ‘Let the scriptural revelation of the divine *economy* of salvation and government, with all its elements, both of the Old and New Testaments, now rejoice over, or concerning, the detection and destruction of this mischievous mixed system of doctrinal errors, this perversion of gospel truths.’

‘For God hath avenged you on her ;’ *quoniam judicavit Deus judicium vestrum de illa*—since God has judged your judgment concerning her. Literally, the prophets and apostles are vindicated by a manifestation of the coincidence of divine judgment, in all that they have proclaimed or uttered against the false doctrines in contemplation. Spiritually, the elements of the Old and New Testament revelation are vindicated or avenged, by a like manifestation of the correctness of the testimony borne both by the law and the gospel to the fallacy of this great refuge of lies.

There is joy in heaven, and amongst the angels of heaven, over one sinner that repenteth. Even Nineveh was spared, because, besides human beings, the city contained much cattle ; and Paul had continual sorrow for his brethren according to the flesh, who were in error, and even in absolute unbelief. Here saints, prophets, and apostles, are called upon to rejoice over the distress and destruction of the whole population of an immense city ; the conflagration of Babylon, involving, as may be presumed, the loss of life on the part of most of her inhabitants, as is implied in the call to the objects of divine mercy to come out of her.

It is evident that the passage will admit of no other construction than that which we have given to it—the overthrow of some immense system of false doctrine, ruinous to the souls of men, and hostile to the glory of God. The destruction of such a system may well furnish occasion for rejoicing to all interested in the promulgation of truth, and in the eternal welfare of their fellow-beings.

Vs. 21-23. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast (it) into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee ; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft (he be,) shall be found any more in thee ; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee ; and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee ;

Καὶ ἦρεν εἰς ἄγγελος ἰσχυρὸς λίθον ὡς μύλον μέγαν, καὶ ἔβαλεν εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν, λέγων· οὕτως ὀρμήματι βληθήσεται Βαβυλὼν ἡ μεγάλη πόλις, καὶ οὐ μὴ εὕρεθῇ ἔτι. Καὶ φωνὴ κιθαριστῶν καὶ μουσικῶν καὶ αὐλητῶν καὶ σαλπιστῶν οὐ μὴ ἀκουσθῇ ἐν σοὶ ἔτι, καὶ πᾶς τεχνίτης πάσης τέχνης οὐ μὴ εὕρεθῇ ἐν σοὶ ἔτι, καὶ φωνὴ μύλου οὐ μὴ ἀκουσθῇ ἐν σοὶ ἔτι, καὶ αὖτις λύχνου οὐ μὴ φανῇ ἐν σοὶ ἔτι, καὶ φωνὴ νυμφίου καὶ νέμψης οὐ μὴ ἀκουσθῇ ἐν σοὶ ἔτι· ὅτι οἱ ἔμ-

and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

ποροὶ σου ἦσαν οἱ μεγιστᾶνες τῆς γῆς, ὅτι ἐν τῇ φαρμακείᾳ σου ἐπλανήθησαν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.

§ 416. ‘And a mighty angel,’ &c.; or, a *strong* angel, as the same word *ἰσχυρός* is elsewhere rendered; the strength of the angel corresponding with the magnitude of the stone taken up, although this appears hardly a sufficient reason for introducing the adjunct; for, if the angel took up the stone and cast it, he was of course sufficiently strong to do so. The Latin rendering, *unus angelus potens*, would appear to attach importance to the circumstance that the operation was performed by one single angel. If we use the numeral *εἷς*, according to a suggestion before made, (§ 145,) as an ordinal, its employment here will carry us back to the *first* strong angel mentioned in the Apocalypse, (Rev. v. 2,) acting as a herald on the occasion of the opening of the sealed book; the same angel or messenger then calling for a development of the mystery, now announces the first important result of that development.

An argument in favour of this construction is, that when the strong angel is mentioned the first time, as above, καὶ εἶδον ἄγγελον ἰσχυρόν, no article, either definite or indefinite, is used. On the second occasion, (Rev. x. 1,) the term *another* (ἄλλον) is employed also without an article. On this third occasion, therefore, the numeral *εἷς*, used as an article, would appear as unnecessary as it was in the first instance; but if we consider it an ordinal, we then have a specific reason for its introduction—showing the connection between this account of Babylon and the sealed book, and reminding us that this angel had been watching, as it were, with peculiar interest, the whole development through which we have been conducted.

‘A stone like a great millstone, and cast it,’ &c.—There may be an allusion here to the sentence pronounced, Matt. xviii. 6, against certain causes of offence—the casting of stumbling-blocks in the way of those seeking after truth, the little ones believing in Jesus. Babylon has proved a trap, or cause of offence, to multitudes of this character; and now like a millstone she is cast down, never to rise again. A principal feature in this comparison, is the irrecoverable nature of the destruction illustrated: a stone cast into the midst of the sea; being utterly lost sight of, leaving no trace behind it, while it is incapable of coming again to the surface, either by its own or by any human power; the figure in this respect corresponding with the direction given to the messenger of the prophet, Jer. li. 63, 64: “And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates; and thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her.”

Taking the sea also as a figure of the vindictive wrath of divine justice, this casting of the stone is a comparison equivalent to an exhibition of the result of an exposure of the mixed system of Babylon to the action of this element of infinite justice, showing how *entirely* the one must be swallowed up or ingulfed in the other; as we might say of any mixed system of salvation, that it is no more adequate to a satisfaction of the claims of the law than a millstone would be to a filling up of the abyss.

‘Thus with violence,’ &c.—The word translated *violence* is applicable to a great vehemence or impetuosity of action. Our imagination is conducted by it to the velocity of accelerated motion with which any ponderous body must descend from an immense height to the earth. The illustration corresponds with the swiftness of destruction (ταχινήρ ἀπόλειαν) predicted of certain false teachers and their heresies, 2 Peter ii. 1. This swiftness also involving the idea of *suddenness*; as it was predicted of Babylon, Is. xlvii. 10, 11, “Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thy heart, *I am*, and none else besides me. Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth [the morning thereof, Heb.]: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off [expiate]: and desolation shall come upon thee *suddenly*, which thou shalt not know.”

§ 417. ‘And shall be found no more at all.’—We have seen Babylon in flames as a system—as a system tried by fire, and proving to be entirely of combustible materials. But even the site of Babylon is to disappear—the location of the city is nowhere to be found. The smoke of her burning, it is said in the next chapter, shall rise up forever and ever; the evidence of the trial and destruction of the system will be eternal, but the system itself will no longer have an existence.

The sign of the future, *shall*, is employed here, as in the previous description of the conflagration. We may consider the events themselves as synchronizing with the final destruction of the beast and false prophet, although in a literal sense the idea of time is not to be taken into consideration. The final destruction of Babylon and that of the beast happen simultaneously, because one is involved in the other; but the particulars are related successively, no doubt that the narrative may be better adapted to human comprehension. The declaration of the mighty angel, Rev x. 6, is ever to be kept in view: χρόνος οὐκέτι ἔσται, There shall be time no longer; our construction of this declaration (§ 230) being confirmed, especially by the use of the words οὐ μὴ ἔτι, *no more at all*, as we find them employed on this occasion.

‘And the voice of harpers,’ &c.—Here follows an enumeration of various characteristics of the happiness, prosperity, and increasing power of a kingdom or great city, of all of which Babylon is to be suddenly deprived.



There are four kinds of musicians mentioned, each of them probably capable of affording some peculiar illustration. The harp was the instrument of praise; the musician (*μουσικός*) was the poet, or perhaps the vocal performer; the piper or flute player accompanied the dancers; and the trumpet was the instrument of martial music: the four may thus furnish a figure for every species of music. Every indication of joy or gladness, of pride or of parade, is alike to cease. The craftsman of every craft (*πᾶς τέχνης πάσης τέχνης*) applies to every species of mechanics or manufacturers: every species of industry, every work of man, is at an end; the sound of the millstone is not heard, for there is no grain now to be prepared for food—the means of sustaining life are taken away. Even if bread were yet called for, Babylon could not furnish it. Illustrations from agricultural life are not introduced here, because they would not be compatible with the figure of a commercial city. The enumeration therefore is equal to a representation of the entire cessation of every human employment. Babylon being destroyed, the *works* of men are entirely at an end. In other words, the mixed system being abolished, all pretensions to salvation by *works* cease, or are found no more at all.

‘And the light of a candle shall no more shine at all in thee.’—Perhaps we may say, not *even* the light of a candle. Babylon is not mentioned as having enjoyed the light of the sun—the inhabitants walked probably in the light of the sparks of their own kindling. Even this light is no more to be seen: the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride is no more heard—there is no longer any marrying or giving in marriage.

All these particulars are to be taken for consequences, and not causes of the desolation. Babylon being burned up, and no more found at all, the consequence is, that the voice of praise, of gladness, and of exultation, ill founded as it was, is now no more heard. The mixed system being utterly destroyed, its pretensions to joy and rejoicing, its pretensions to works, its pretensions to furnishing the bread of life, and its pretensions to light or righteousness, or to the fruitfulness and privileges represented by the marriage state, all cease together. The real causes of praise and joy, the real means of eternal life, the real privileges and blessings represented by the marriage union, never were to be found in the mixed system; but it has its pretensions to these things. The whole system, tried as by fire, being consumed, the fallacy of these pretensions is at once exposed, and no place is afterwards found for them.

§ 418. ‘For thy merchants were the great men of the earth.’—Here we have the reasons for the desolations just particularized; and if we consider the conjunction *and*, at the commencement of the next verse, as connecting the subject of that verse with the last clause of the present, we may then consider the whole as furnishing three distinct reasons for the destruc-

tion of this great city. As if it were said, All these things have come upon thee, because thy merchants were the great men of the earth; because by thy sorceries all nations were led astray; and (because) in thee the blood of prophets, &c., was found. This appears to be the sense most consistent with the whole tenor of the passage; the last verse then appearing, as we suppose it to be, part of the angel's declaration; while, otherwise, we are at a loss to know by whom it is uttered.

The word translated *great men*, is applied to "the leading persons in a state," (Donnegan.) It is rendered, Mark vi. 21, by the term *lords*; and Rev. vi. 15, it is classed next in order to *kings*. One reason we say, therefore, why the mixed system is destroyed, is that its mercenary principles have become the leading principles of all that general system which is represented by the earth; and that these mercenary elements have acquired their prominence through the nature of the mixed system.

'For by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.'—*Quia veneficio tuo aberraverunt omnes gentes*, (G. & L.) Because by thy poisonous preparations all the nations (Gentiles) have gone astray. By thy pharmacy, (§ 226,)—by thy practice of medicine—by participating in thy drugs, the nations have gone *mad*, as it is expressed by the prophet, (§ 385;) the figure corresponding in its purport with that of the wine of the harlot, by which the inhabitants of the earth are said to have been made drunk. Babylon is here represented as a great commercial city, dealing in medical preparations and drugs of a peculiarly deleterious character; the nations using these compounds being so deluded by them as not only themselves to be led astray, but also by their consumption of the commodities to give power and importance to the merchants dealing in them. The second cause of the destruction of the mixed system is, therefore, that its pretended means of propitiation—its abominable mixture, (the harlot's cup,)—is of such a character as to pervert the principles of all systems; leading their advocates, as we may say, into the madness or folly of a dependence upon human means of propitiation; an amalgam before remarked upon, (§ 332.)

In respect to her *pharmacy*, Babylon stands in the light of a pretender to medical science, as opposed to the true Physician; her drugs are opposites of the balm of Gilead. The only remedy for sin, the only medicine capable of saving the sinner from eternal death, is the atonement of Christ. The atoning preparation of the mixed system, the result of the pharmacy of Babylon, is an opposite of this atonement of Christ; yet such is its delusive character, that so long as this theory of redemption is sustained, so long the contents of the mixed cup of salvation will enter into the composition of every other system of redemption. At the same time, in the nature of the case, the *mixture* of supposed human merits, in these pretended means of

propitiation, must necessarily give a leading prominence and importance to the mercenary principles of the system to which it is peculiar.

We may here notice the reciprocal action between the mercenary motive and the pretended means of atonement. The medical pretender, or the enchantress, as Babylon may be also styled, prescribes the performance of some great thing on behalf of the patient, as the necessary process of restoration. The performance of this *great thing* involves the acting from mercenary or selfish motives ; and the mercenary and selfish motives entering into this performance, the latter is rendered an abomination, or a mixture of abominations, in the sight of God. The deluded disciple supposes that the *gift* of God is to be *purchased* ; that the *grace*, or favour, of salvation is something for which he is to give an equivalent : his eyes opened to his error, he finds himself in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, (Acts viii. 20.)

V. 24. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

Καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ αἷμα προφητῶν καὶ ἁγίων  
ἐξέθνη καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐσφαγμένων ἐπὶ τῆς  
γῆς.

§ 419. ‘ And in her was found.’—We treat this according to the suggestion just now made, (§ 418,) as a third reason for the destruction of this great city ; as if the mighty angel, after having assigned in his apostrophe to Babylon, two reasons for her demolition, added by way of explanation to the apostle the further reason, that in her was found the blood here described. This supposition, however, is not very material, as under any view this blood-guiltiness of Babylon must have been a reason for the judgment upon her. We cannot suppose the finding of the blood to have been a mere accident or incident, occurring unexpectedly after her destruction ; although we might perhaps suppose this third reason to involve the two preceding specified causes of her visitation ; as we may also suppose the apostle himself to have added the information contained in this verse, as received from some other source than the declaration of the angel. However this be, the use of the future tense is here laid aside, the angel having finished his prediction, and the recital of the fact mentioned carrying us back to the state of the city as depicted after its fall, but prior to its being utterly consumed.

‘ The blood of prophets,’ &c.—Babylon literally was not notorious for shedding the blood of the prophets, although her monarchs were made the instruments of punishing severely some of the Hebrew rulers for their impiety and contumacy towards God. The haughty Nebuchadnezzar was wrought upon, even to the acknowledgment of the true God, by the evidences of divine interposition in behalf of his Jewish captives. Belshazzar recognized, in



Daniel's interpretation of the handwriting upon the wall, the peculiar share of divine favour enjoyed by that servant of the Most High ; and Darius the Mede was alike converted by the prophet's deliverance from the mouths of the lions, Dan. vi. 25-28. On the other hand, we have abundant evidence of the hardness of heart of Jewish sovereigns, amidst the most miraculous displays of divine power, as well as of their persecution of prophets and saints, Rom. xi. 3. To this we may add the testimony of Christ himself concerning the Scribes and Pharisees of Jerusalem, that they were the children of them which killed the prophets ; and that upon them was to come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of Abel to that of Zacharias, (Matt. xxiii. 31, 35.)

Comparing these facts and this declaration with what is here said of the great city, we think the *old Jerusalem* of the apostle's time, as a figure, must be identic with the apocalyptic Babylon ; for, if all the blood of the prophets was to come upon Jerusalem, it could hardly be said to be found in Babylon, unless the two were equivalent figures. The Pharisees were covetous or mercenary, (selfish,) and such is the character of the leading principles of the mixed system. Jerusalem, in the days of the evangelists, was in the hands of the Romans ; professing to be free, but really under the yoke of her Gentile conquerors ; she was Jerusalem in bondage, and was thus the figure of a perverted view of the economy of salvation ;—such is the mixed economy represented by Babylon. The two are therefore identic, and both accordingly are guilty of the same blood of saints and prophets.

§ 420. Blood is the figure of *life*. Holy prophets and saints are apocalyptically figures of elements of divine revelation ; prophets or interpreters being put for prophecies or interpretations, or doctrines taught by prophets and holy men. The natural life of man, we suppose to be a figure of the spiritual sense of these elements of revealed truth. To find blood in a city, is to find the city guilty of murder or manslaughter ; as blood in the *skirts of the garment* is a scriptural figure of evidence of bloodguiltiness, and as blood-guiltiness literally consists in the crime of having deprived a fellow-being of life. Thus the perverted view of the economy of redemption, whether symbolized by Babylon, or by Jerusalem in bondage, is guilty of the blood of saints and prophets, inasmuch as it has deprived the elements of divine revelation of their proper spiritual sense. It is by the suppression of this *sense* of revelation (its life) that the mixed theory is built up ; and accordingly, when the real character of the system is exposed, it will be found to have been guilty of this suppression ; the manifestation of this truth being figuratively equivalent to finding the blood of saints and prophets in the place once the scene of their persecution.

‘ And of all that were slain upon the earth.’—The word translated *slain*

is the same as that employed in describing the appearance of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. As we have before remarked, (§ 161,) the term is especially applicable to the slaughter of animals for the purposes of sacrifice, differing in this respect from the verb ἀποκτείνω, which signifies merely *to kill*. It is not said that in Babylon was found the blood of all killed upon the earth, but of all slain or slaughtered; we presume as in sacrifice. The term is also the same applied to the slaughter of those whose souls were under the altar, slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. In a literal sense, the blood of *all slain upon the earth*, without qualification, as it is in the text, would be the blood of all, whether good or bad. Such cannot be the correct interpretation; at the same time, this general appellation of *all* must comprehend something more than the prophets and saints just spoken of. These last, we suppose, may be contemplated as victims sacrificed or slain in the cause of truth; as the souls under the altar were souls of the bodies offered upon the altar. As prophets and saints are figures of divine revelation, we suppose the other elements comprehended under the term *all* to be subordinate elements of truth, occupying a relation analogous to that of *followers* of prophets and holy men: deductions from the doctrines of revelation, tending to sustain a correct view of the economy of grace, so long as their proper spiritual sense is understood; but unable to do so when this sense is suppressed. The earth we suppose to represent an exhibition of the position of man dependent upon his own works. To exhibit the maintenance of this position, it is necessary to divest all elements of revelation, and all doctrinal deductions from these elements, of their spiritual sense; all of them, figuratively speaking, must suffer martyrdom, in order that this *earthly* view may be sustained: and this view itself must be sustained, in order to sustain the mixed system. Therefore in Babylon, as the efficient cause of this slaughter, the blood of all of these elements, whether direct or subordinate, is to be found; the fact, as detailed here, being equivalent to the declaration that all perversion of Christian doctrine has originated in the nature of this system of adulteration—a system which we cannot better designate than by giving it the appellative of a *simulation* of the divine plan of redemption;—the plan comprehending the principles of government (the kingdom) resulting from it.

#### RETROSPECT.

§ 421. There seems to be a gradual development of the character of Babylon, or rather, of the economy represented by her, in the relation of this and of the preceding chapter. In the first account (chap. xvii.) no

intimation is given of the *mercenary* features of the system in contemplation ; nor is there any allusion to the pharmacies (sorceries) of Babylon, other than that presumed to be contained in what is said of her *wine*, and of the contents of her golden cup.

In the first part of the present chapter, there is a gradual merging of the figure of the female sovereign into that of a commercial city. The illustrations drawn from the two figures are alternated, as if to guard against the possibility of mistaking them for representations of different subjects. As the dwelling-place of unclean spirits, Babylon is spoken of as a city ; as maintaining an illicit connection with the kings of the earth, she appears under the figure of a woman ; while, as the cause of the opulence of the merchants of the earth, she is again alluded to as a commercial city. So, when the people of God are called out of her, the figure is that of a city ; while immediately afterwards her proud language appears to be that of a human being.

Thus far we are brought to an acquaintance with the characteristics of impurity, adulteration, self-dependence and pride of this Babylonish system, together with its extensive influence as producing drunkenness or insanity in all partaking of it. But, except the slight allusion to the fact, noticed for the first time in the third verse of the chapter, that the merchants had waxed rich through the great luxury of the city, we have as yet no explicit declaration of the nature of the peculiar charges against Babylon calling for her immediate and utter destruction. Here the whole of the remainder of this chapter, from the eleventh to the twenty-third verses inclusive, is calculated to throw a new light upon the subject.

As a city, Babylon is supposed to be the emporium of the commerce of the whole world. The whole world of course is subject to the influence of her commercial relations. As such a city, she is especially a place of trade, a place of mercantile calculation—a place where nothing is received or given without an equivalent. As a city, or as a kingdom—for she is an imperial city—Babylon is represented as being ruled or governed by merchants only ; for the figure of a queen is here dropped. The figures may alternate, but they are not coexistent. The city may assume to be a queen, but it does not profess to be under a queen, or a king, or under the dominion of any single individual. It is governed by a number of magistrates or rulers ; and these are all of them *merchants*. Such is the tendency of the commerce of this great city, that it not only gives a peculiar importance to the merchants of the earth, but that it causes its own merchants to be its rulers. This great city is at length destroyed—utterly destroyed—and its merchant-rulers may be presumed to be destroyed with it. The world, however, has participated in its commerce ; the merchants of *the whole earth* have acquired opulence and importance by this commerce, and may be supposed in con-



sequence to have a ruling influence wherever they make their appearance. Here then is the great cause of lamentation,—by the fall of Babylon, her commerce ceases, and all connected with it lose their importance and their influence. What is further remarkable is, that this very subject of universal regret and mourning is itself the cause of the calamity so deeply deplored.

In the few words at the close of the twenty-third verse, we have the key to the whole of this mysterious dispensation. Babylon has been utterly destroyed, *because her merchants were the great men of the earth*; because by her *pharmacies* (the medical preparations dealt in by these merchants) all nations were deceived. For her mischievous influence upon the rulers or kings of other countries, she was overthrown; for giving opulence to the merchants of the earth, she was made desolate; but her *entire* destruction, as a millstone cast into the sea, never to rise again, is a judgment especially for the fact that her merchants were the *great men of the earth*.

How can such a relation as this be construed in a literal sense; or what *rational* conclusion can we come to, with respect to it, other than that of considering this city, as we have done, the figure of a certain doctrinal system? The system is chargeable with errors peculiarly abominable in the sight of God, and with an influence as peculiarly contaminating upon other principles and other systems. It is subjected to scrutiny or trial as by a refiner's fire, and the cause of its peculiar errors proves to be, that it is itself a mercenary scheme, and that its ruling or leading principles are also mercenary. Not only so, the tendency of its errors, the contaminating influence exercised by it, is that of causing all views of faith bearing any relation to it to come under the control of like elements of a mercenary character. The peculiarly odious characteristic of these elements is, that they are directly opposed to the sovereignty of the divine principle of grace. For this reason, before God's plan of salvation can be fully recognized, before his ruling principle of *sovereign grace* can overcome all others, these mercenary elements and the system to which they belong must be entirely destroyed. To this crisis we have now arrived, in the order of the apocalyptic vision. One of the principal stumbling-blocks or obstacles in the way of the development of gospel truth is removed; the others, as we shall see, very speedily experience a like fate; after which we may expect an unveiling or revelation of the truth itself.

Babylon was first exhibited as a harlot sitting upon many waters, representing apparently the mixed economy, founded, as it is, upon various false and delusive views of the means of propitiation. She is next seen in the wilderness sitting upon the beast (*self*) with his seven heads, (fundamental principles,) and his ten horns or elements of the law. Thus sustained, she

offers her cup of mixture in place of the true cup of salvation, her votaries, no doubt, not discerning the difference. Again, she is represented sitting upon seven mountains—the mixed system resting upon seven fundamental principles of self-glorification, and at the same time exercising a perverting control over seven leading principles, spoken of as kings—this number *seven* representing, perhaps, a totality ; seven leading or fundamental principles being put for all principles of that character. These three *pictures* represent Babylon in her glory—the mixed system in full operation. We next see the same individual torn to pieces and burned with fire by the ten horns—the mixed system entirely destroyed by the elements of law upon which it had been depending. Again, we see Babylon as a city the habitation of devils, and the hold of every unclean spirit—the mixed system laid bare, seen in its true character. And lastly, we have a prophetic description of the final destruction of the city as a great commercial emporium, as by fire, or as a millstone cast into the depth of the sea ;—these three figures of destruction corresponding in number with the three figures or pictures of elevation ; the three, however, in each case representing only different illustrations of the same truths.

The cause of the destruction by the ten horns is not assigned, except so far as it is attributed to the hatred of the horns, and to the will of God. We may presume, however, that the cause is the same as that assigned for the utter destruction of the city. The ten horns hate the harlot because of her *mercenary* character ; the law requiring the performance of every action from the pure motive of love to God, as a fulfilment even of the first commandment. So we may suppose the pretended means of propitiation offered by the adulterated scheme, and represented by the cup of the harlot, to be abominable and filthy in the sight of God, on account of the mercenary principles entering into its composition. Thus, having ascertained from the mighty angel the peculiar reason of Babylon's *entire* destruction, we may apply this reason to all that we have previously learned of her character, and thence perceive the extreme hatefulness of every mercenary or covetous principle in the sight of God.

As already intimated, we trust the time is not far distant when this test of doctrinal systems will be generally applied. In the meantime, it is for every disciple of Christ to examine his own heart, to search into the principles and motives of his own conduct, and to inquire of himself whether he be not under the influence of the delusive cup of mixed ingredients here described ; whether his own motives of action be not of the mercenary character alluded to ; whether, in fine, his own system of faith be not of the adulterated character so extremely odious in the sight of God.

## CHAPTER XIX.

CHORUS AND RESPONSES.—GOING FORTH OF THE  
WORD.—BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON.

Vs. 1-3. And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous (are) his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

Μετὰ ταῦτα ἤκουσα ὡς φωνὴν μεγάλην ὄχλου πολλοῦ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, λεγόντων· ἁλληλοῦία· ἡ σωτηρία καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν· ὅτι ἠληθινὰ καὶ δίκαιαι αἱ κρίσεις αὐτοῦ· ὅτι ἔκρινε τὴν πόρνην τὴν μεγάλην, ἣτις ἐφθείρε τὴν γῆν ἐν τῇ πορνείᾳ αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐξεδίκησε τὸ αἷμα τῶν δούλων αὐτοῦ ἐκ χειρὸς αὐτῆς. Καὶ δευτέρον εἶρηξαν· ἁλληλοῦία· καὶ ὁ καπνὸς αὐτῆς ἀναβαίνει εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

§ 422. ‘AND after these things I heard,’ &c.—That is, after hearing the prophetic accounts of the conflagration, and the entire destruction of Babylon. The change is not in what is seen, so much as in what is heard; the attention of the apostle is called to something very different from that with which it was before occupied. He had been listening to a description of the desolation and wo incident to the fall of the great city: he now hears only the language of praise, joy, and exultation, reminding us that an event so lamentable to one class of beings, is as much a cause of rejoicing with another.

‘A great voice of much people,’ &c.; or, according to our Greek, a great voice, or sound, like that of a great multitude. The voice is not said to be that of much people, but it is compared to the sound of the voices of an immense number of persons. The preceding denunciations were uttered as by a single voice, though sometimes said to be a great voice; the utterance of gratulation in heaven is as a great voice of a great multitude. Whatever regret the demolition of a system of error may cause to some on earth, the rejoicing at the triumph of truth with the lovers of truth in earth and heaven must be infinitely greater.

‘Saying, Alleluia,’ or, Hallelujah, according to our common mode of rendering the expression.—The Greek word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, and in the Septuagint it is found only in the Psalms. In



this chapter of Revelation, it is repeated four several times, and we may presume not without reason, compounded as it is of two Hebrew words, *כְּבוֹד*, glory, or *תְּהִלָּה*, praise, and *יְהוָה*, Jah or Jehovah—*nomen veri Dei*—the name of the true God, (Index Heb. et Chald. Trommii;) the whole expression signifying an ascription of praise or glory to God pre-eminently, as above all other objects of praise, (Ps. lxxviii. 4.)

‘Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God.’—This may be taken as an amplification of the Hebrew words just noticed: a repetition laying a peculiar emphasis upon the designation of the supreme object of praise—the Lord our God; the salvation, and the glory, and the honour, and the power of the whole work of redemption, being all ascribed to this one object, which is confirmed by the *Alleluia*, or Praise ye Jehovah, repeated at the close of this ascription; this again being confirmed, as we shall see, by the *Alleluia* of the four and twenty elders, and of the four living creatures, as well as by their act of prostration and worship of the God sitting upon the throne. To this we may add the voice from the throne, giving the direction, Praise our God, all ye his servants, &c., (5th verse,) and the further response of the voice of a great multitude, or as of a great multitude reiterating the *Alleluia*, assigning the *sovereignty* of the Lord God as the reason for this praise.

Prior to this, Rev. v. 13, and vii. 10, there had been two choral ascriptions of the praise of salvation, not to God alone, but to God and the Lamb. The peculiarity of the passage now under consideration is, that the Lamb is not mentioned as being a joint object of praise, as in the other instances. Connecting this peculiarity with the circumstance that the great system of error symbolized by the harlot, is now represented as utterly destroyed, we come to the conclusion that the present epoch of revelation corresponds with that alluded to by Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 28: “When all things having been put under him, the Son also himself shall be subject unto Him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.” This stage of the revelation may also be considered equivalent to a manifestation of the fulfilment of the prophecy, (Is. ix. 6,) “Unto us a child is born,” &c., “called the mighty God, the everlasting Father;” so predicted, because he is now manifested to be *identical* with the Deity;—the Father and Son in these ascriptions of praise being both addressed as one and the same sovereign God.

It is true that, in the order of narration, the destruction of the beast, and of the false prophet, and of the accuser, is yet to be detailed; but *time*, in the ordinary sense, (§ 230,) is not to be taken into consideration; and even if it were, that which is to be done on earth is spoken of in heaven as already done. These heavenly elements may be said to see, in the destruction of the harlot, the victory over all the other objects alluded to as the

enemies of the Lamb; the demolition of error and the exhibition of truth being nearly interchangeable expressions. The representation of the destruction of Babylon here, is accordingly equivalent to the exhibition of the holy city described in the two last chapters of the book. Besides, we are to notice an important difference in the language of this chorus, and that of the voice from heaven, and of the mighty angel in the preceding chapter. The utter destruction of the harlot city is there spoken of as a thing *to be*; here, it is spoken of as having already taken place. This scene in heaven may thus be considered something in anticipation of all that is afterwards described as taking place on earth; the battles, of which we have a relation at the close of this and in the subsequent chapter, taking place in effect between the prediction of the mighty angel casting the millstone, and the utterance of these triumphant *Alleluias*. In confirmation of this view, we may further remark that, notwithstanding the extraordinary events related in the remaining chapters, the present is the last heavenly chorus of which we have an account; and as such, in a human dramatic composition, it would probably have its place at the close of the piece.\*

§ 423. ‘For [because] true and righteous are his judgments; for [because] he hath judged,’ &c.—Here we have the reason given for this ascription of salvation to God; not that the destruction of the harlot is itself the means of salvation, &c., but that it is the means of showing to whom the honour of that salvation is due. As if it were said, Now it is manifest that Babylon is not a city of refuge, that the mixed system affords no hope of safety, that man has no share in the merit or glory of this work of redemption; consequently Jehovah alone is to be praised—His glory is not to be divided with another—corresponding with the uniform language of the prophets and the Psalmist: as it is said Is. xii. 2, “Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid: the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song;” and Ps. lxii. 7, “God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.” The trial to which Babylon has been exposed has resulted in exhibiting the falsehood of her system, and thus the truth and justice of divine judgment in its destruction is manifested. With the words rendered *judgment* and *judge*, we associate espe-

\* The first choral ascription of praise may be viewed as anticipating the developments of the six seals, reaching to the close of the sixth chapter; the second like ascription anticipates the developments of the seventh seal, extending to the termination of the eighteenth chapter; while the third and last choral ascription anticipates all the remaining narrative, even to the close of the book. The last, therefore, reaches, as we have observed, that stage of revelation where God is manifested to be all in all. God, manifest in Christ, being no other than “Jehovah our righteousness.” This we think must be the reason for the reiterated utterance of the *Alleluia* by the great voice in heaven, and the responsive *Alleluias* of the four and twenty elders and four living creatures, and of the voice or voices described in the sixth verse.

cially the idea of *discrimination*. The line of discrimination has been drawn and manifested between the system of the harlot and that of error, and the result of this manifest discrimination is now the cause of praise.

‘Which did corrupt the earth,’ &c.—Whatever the harlot system be, it must have, or must have had, a very extensive influence; spreading itself over the whole surface of the ordinary view of revelation, adulterating and corrupting the doctrines of Christianity, destroying all sound principles coming in contact with it; as a mass of putrefied matter will engender putrefaction in a sound body immediately exposed to its action.

‘And hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hands;’—or, more strictly, has vindicated the blood of his servants *out of* her hands. To *avenge* is not necessarily to *revenge*. The idea of *revenge* does not appear to be that intended to be conveyed by the text; it is rather that of a rescue or restoration, as the Greek term ἐξδικέω is employed, Luke xviii. 3: ἐξδικήσῃς με ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀρτιδίκου μου, (cause my property to be restored to me out of the hands of him by whom it is unjustly held,) vindicate my rights, cause justice to be done to me, (Donnegan.) So too, Rev. vi. 10, ἕως πότε οὐ κρίνεις καὶ ἐξδικεῖς τὸ αἷμα ἡμῶν ἀπὸ, &c., until how long will thou not judge and vindicate our blood *from*, &c.\* The blood of saints and of prophets had been found in Babylon after her fall. The finding of this blood was equivalent to its *vindication*, showing where the guilt of the loss of it lay; or, as we construe it, (§ 420.) this blood of the prophets, &c., being the spiritual sense of the elements of revelation, to find the mixed system guilty of the suppression of this sense is equivalent to a restoration or deliverance of it. So we suppose the finding and exposing, or bringing to light this suppressed spiritual sense of the prophets, to be equivalent to vindicating the blood of those whose souls were under the altar *from* the dwellers upon the earth. The servants of God, in the apocalyptic sense, are the elements of revelation serving him in the promulgation of truth. Depriving these servants of their blood, (life,) was a withholding of the spiritual sense of their testimony, as if judged untrue; avenging this blood is a vindication of the truth of this testimony in its proper sense, showing it to be just, and bringing it forth as from a state of confinement. The illustration afforded by the figure appears to be parallel to that furnished by the typical restoration of the Jews after their captivity.

‘And her smoke rose up for ever and ever;’ or, Her smoke *rises up* for

\* Ἐξδικέω, ex ek et δίκη, vindico pass. vindicor, (Suiceri Lex. et Trom. Concord. et Lex. ad Hexapla.) Vindico; to restore, vindicare libertatem Gallia: to claim, Familiam pæne ab interitu vindicasti: Vindicæ; the asserting or clearing a thing from controversy; discernere vindicias secundum libertatem: Vindicta; a rod laid upon the head of a servant, (slave,) when he was made free, (Ainsworth.) To vindicate; to justify, to maintain as correct or true, (Webster.)



ever and ever; the Greek verb being in the present tense. This clause appears to be thrown in by way of explanation; as if to apprise us that the conflagration in the last chapter had actually taken place, and that all now remaining of Babylon was the evidence of her total destruction. The fire of the revealed word of God acting upon the mixed system of error, and completely destroying it, affords also a perpetual testimony of that destruction. This evidence itself, as it prevents any resuscitation of the delusion, furnishes a guarantee of the fulfilment of the prediction, that the system, once demolished, shall be found *no more at all*, Rev. xviii. 21.

Vs. 4, 5. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts [living creatures] fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

Καὶ ἔπεσον οἱ πρεσβύτεροι οἱ ἑκοσιτέσσαρες καὶ τὰ τέσσαρα ζῷα, καὶ προσεκύνησαν τῷ θεῷ τῷ καθήμενῳ ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου, λέγοντες· ἡμῖν· ἀλληλουῖα. Καὶ φωνὴ ἐκ τοῦ θρόνου ἐξῆλθε λέγουσα· αἰνεῖτε τὸν θεὸν ἡμῶν, πάντες οἱ δοῦλοι αὐτοῦ καὶ οἱ φοβούμενοι αὐτόν, οἱ μικροὶ καὶ οἱ μεγάλοι.

§ 424. ‘And the four and twenty elders,’ &c.—The four and twenty elements of the Old Testament revelation, (§ 121,) or of the old and new, and the four attributes of divine sovereignty, (§ 125) virtually respond to this ascription of salvation, glory, honour, and power, to God, as the all in all; a response indicated more especially by their Alleluia. In fact, these twenty-four elders and the four living creatures give all honour and glory to the Lord God Almighty from the beginning. They rest not day nor night in doing so, (Rev. iv. 8,) although they also join with the myriads of angels round about the throne in ascribing worthiness to the Lamb, (Rev. v. 12.) The four and twenty elders prostrated themselves, as here described, on the sounding of the seventh trumpet, (Rev. xi. 16–18,) rejoicing then that the time had come for doing that which they now rejoice over as having been done. There is no difference, however, of time between these two prostrations; the difference is only in the progress of the developments.

‘And a voice came out of the throne,’ &c.—The throne being a symbol of sovereign power, (§ 118,) this voice from the throne must be equivalent to a virtual call of the sovereignty of God to adore *him*—to direct all praise to him.

The servants of God being, apocalyptically, the elements of truth, the call on these to praise the Lord, is equivalent to the requisition that all elements of doctrine should begin and end with the purpose and effect of glorifying God. It is the sovereignty of God which enables him to save *by grace*; it is his sovereignty which enables him to form and to accomplish the work of salvation by grace. The Lamb is the visible operator in the work, but the sovereignty of God is the element of divine power by which the Lamb operates. This sovereignty therefore is appropriately represented

as calling upon all elements of doctrine (small and great) to give glory to God—that is, ultimately, as at the epoch when the Son gives up the kingdom unto the Father.

Vs. 6, 7. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

Καὶ ἤκουσα ὡς φωνὴν ὄχλου πολλοῦ καὶ ὡς φωνὴν ὑδάτων πολλῶν καὶ ὡς φωνὴν βροντῶν ἰσχυρῶν, λεγόντων· ἀλληλούϊα, ὅτι ἐβασίλευσε κίριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ. Χαίρωμεν καὶ ἀγαλλιώμεθα, καὶ δώμεν τὴν δόξαν αὐτῷ, ὅτι ἦλθεν ὁ γάμος τοῦ ἀρνίου καὶ ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ ἡτοίμασεν ἑαυτήν,

§ 425. ‘And I heard,’ &c.—This is a response to the voice from the *throne*—the call from the element of divine sovereignty. Like the voice spoken of in the first verse, although not termed great, it is compared to the voice of much people, or of a great multitude, the term in the Greek being the same in both cases, (ὄχλου πολλοῦ.) This last voice, however, is not said to be in heaven, being apparently of a universal character. It is also compared to the sound of many waters, and to that of mighty thunderings. These voices we suppose to be put for the expression of doctrines; the waters being an allusion to doctrines pertaining to means of atonement of a judicial character, and the thunderings to the threatening principles of the law; all elements of justice, of propitiation, and of justification, combining virtually to give praise and glory to Jehovah, especially for the reason assigned, viz., his *sovereignty*—glory to Jehovah for, or because, (ὅτι,) the Almighty God reigneth—not merely because he is, but because he reigns. Glory is now given to God because he has manifested his sovereignty in subjecting all things, or principles, to the operation of salvation by grace, through Christ. The fact having been always the same from the beginning, the rejoicing is a consequence of the *manifestation* of the facts; all things having been manifested to have been made subject by the Almighty God to Christ, the Son gives up the kingdom unto the Father, and God himself (the triune God) receives the whole praise.

‘Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honour to him, for [because] the marriage,’ &c.—As the ascription of praise to Jehovah is because of his sovereignty, so the reason for the gladness, and rejoicing, and giving of honour, is because this sovereignty is, or is about being manifested in a certain mode—a mode compared to that of a public celebration of the nuptials of parties previously espoused. The plan of redemption having been formed and determined upon in the divine mind from the beginning, although not *actually* manifested till the whole mystery is revealed, this revelation is a cause of joy and rejoicing, in a literal sense, to the believer; for which reason it is termed the *gospel*, or glad tidings: but in the figure before us all the ele-

ments of divine government are represented as rejoicing ; even the element of justice rejoices that the time has now arrived for the exhibition of that plan by which the hitherto apparently conflicting attributes of infinite perfection are shown to be reconciled.

The word rendered marriage (*γάμος*) applies primarily to the marriage solemnity, or nuptial entertainment—the *feast* usually given on the occasion of a marriage, (Donnegan ;) in which sense it appears to be generally used in the Scriptures. According to the Septuagint, the term occurs but three times in the canonical books of the Old Testament.

On the occasion of Jacob's marriage with Leah, (Gen. xxix. 22,) Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast, (*καὶ ἐποίησε γάμον.*) The parties to the feast (*γάμος*) were not Jacob and Leah, but the men of the place. The relation affords us a hint of the original design of a feast on such occasions. In those days there were no priests or ministers of religion, or magistrates, to give certificates of marriage ; nor were there any parish records ; the proofs of the validity of the union depended upon those who were witnesses between the contracting parties—the husband on one side, and the father of the bride on the other : the bride being brought into the assembly, veiled no doubt according to the custom of the country, was in this state given by the father to the husband elect, in presence of the company. Laban, aware of the grievous disappointment incident to his purposed deceit, and anticipating the possibility of a dispute between himself and his intended son-in-law, took care to assemble as many witnesses as possible on the occasion, and witnesses too upon whose aid he could calculate, in case of a controversy with the *stranger* ; in which light Jacob was probably considered by these men of the country. The design of the feast (*γάμος*) was therefore to *manifest the union*—to place the fact beyond dispute. This Laban, as we may suppose, did not consider as necessary in the case of Rachel, Jacob's partiality for her being a sufficient guarantee that the fact of the marriage would not be controverted.

The term afterwards occurs only in the plural, (*γάμοι*), being applied (Est. ii. 18) to the feast or feasts made by king Ahasuerus, subsequent to the crowning of his queen, apparently to give publicity to the distinction enjoyed by her ; and, ix. 22, to the annual feasting of the Jewish people, on the fifteenth day of the month Adar, in commemoration of their deliverance from the power of Haman ; manifestation and commemoration being accordingly in the time of the LXX the peculiar ideas to be associated with the term.

In the account given (Matt. xxii. 2–12) of the marriage, as we have translated it, made for a king's son, the term *γάμος*, which occurs eight times in the passage, is expressed both in the singular and plural, an equal number of times each, *feast* and *feasts*,—the feasting usual on such occasions,



continuing for a certain number of days in succession. It is also employed in the plural, Matt. xxv. 10: Those that were ready went in with him (the bridegroom) to the *feasts*,—the marriage itself having, as we suppose, already taken place; the feasting being something consequent to the marriage, and not the marriage itself. In Mark the substantive does not occur. In Luke it is met with but three times, and only in the plural. In two of these instances the idea of a marriage does not necessarily form a part of the subject in contemplation. Luke xii. 36, servants are required to be ready for their master when he returns from any feast, or all feasts; and Luke xiv. 8, the rule is applied to all festal occasions: ‘When thou art bidden of any one to *feasts*, sit not down in the principal seat,’ &c. Luke xvi. 18, and Heb. xiii. 4, the term appears to be used in the secondary sense, as applicable to the state of marriage generally. John ii. 1, 2, the *γάμος* is very evidently a feast subsequent to a marriage.

The importance of this distinction may appear more plainly when we come to consider the declaration in the ninth verse of the chapter. In the meantime we are to bear in mind that the cause of joy and rejoicing, on the part of the elements represented by these voices, is the approach of the marriage *feast*. The Lamb may be considered as having been previously united with his bride, but the time has now come for giving publicity to this union, or for its manifestation.

‘And his wife hath made herself ready;’ or, rather, his *woman*.—The term rendered wife here, *ἡ γυνή*, is the same as that translated woman, Rev. xvii. 4, and xii. 1. Both the harlot and the bride are denominated *women*; but the important question is, whose woman each or either of them may be. The one now spoken of is the woman of the Lamb. The one spoken of in the seventeenth chapter may be said to be the woman of the beast, or of the seven kings, represented by the seven heads of the beast. The woman of the Lamb has made herself ready: that is, ready for the *feast*; for the celebration of the nuptials; for the festal occasion which is to give publicity to the union—a union in fact necessarily existing from all eternity. The bride is now ready for the *manifestation* of this union. The next verse will show us in what manner she has been prepared.

V. 8. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῇ, ἵνα περιβάλῃται βύσσινον λευκὸν καὶ καθαρόν· τὸ γὰρ βύσσινον τὰ δικαιώματα τῶν ἁγίων ἐστί.

§ 426. ‘And to her was granted;’ or, it was given to her.—She is ready, because her bridal dress is *given* to her—her preparation is a matter of *gift*. Not merely that permission is given her so to array herself, but this is the portion allotted her; a provision made for her marriage settlement.

an arrangement made not merely for the occasion, but one previously made, to endure as long as the union endures.

It does not appear whether this announcement is part of the utterance of the voice, declaring the readiness of the woman, or whether it is added by the apostle by way of explanation, as information obtained by him from some other source. If we read the words, And to her it *has been* given, they would appear a continuation of the declaration in the seventh verse; otherwise they are introduced in the same manner as the sentence above, concerning Babylon, “And her smoke rises up,” &c., or as the explanation at the close of that chapter, “And in her was found the blood,” &c. With either of those explanatory clauses the present is strikingly antithetical.

‘That she should be arrayed;’ or, *clothed*, as the word is elsewhere rendered.—The verb περιβάλλω, of which the expression here is a form of the middle voice, (Rob. Lex.,) appears to be almost exclusively applied to the putting on of an outer garment, or something corresponding with it; as, Acts xii. 8, “Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me;” and as Jesus, by way of mockery, was clothed by Herod with a gorgeous robe, Luke xxiii. 11. The mighty angel was so *clothed* with a cloud; the two witnesses with sackcloth; the woman in heaven with the sun; the harlot in the wilderness with purple; and even Babylon, in her glory, with fine linen. The idea to be associated with the term is that of the *appearance* exhibited; as the woman in heaven appeared clothed with the sun, or arrayed in the glory of the Sun of righteousness, so it is given to the bride to appear in public as here described.

‘In fine linen, clean and white;’ or, according to our edition of the Greek, *white clean*, or rather *shining clean* (λαμπρὸν καθαρόν);—the word rendered *white* being the same as that rendered *clear* when applied to the water of the river of life, (Rev. xxii. 1,) and *bright* when applied to the morning star, (Rev. xxii. 16,) λαμπρὸν. To her was given to be clothed in fine linen of *resplendent purity*. Babylon had been clothed in fine linen, but her linen was purchased of the merchants; the fine linen of the bride is the *gift* of the Father of the Lamb, and its appearance differs as much from that of Babylon, as does the mode by which it has been obtained, or the source whence it is received. The fine linen of Babylon has none of this transparent, lucid purity.

‘For the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.’—The righteousnesses (plural) or the justifications of the saints, (τὰ δικαιώματα τῶν ἁγίων,) the means by which the saints are justified, (§ 352.) This shining white fine linen being the righteousnesses of the saints, it is given the bride to appear in it as her peculiarly appropriate bridal array for the contemplated feast; this array being a consequence and not a cause of her marriage.

As yet this *woman* of the Lamb is only spoken of as a person to make

her appearance ; we know that she is a *bride* only by inference ; the term itself (*νύμφη*) not having yet occurred in the Apocalypse in relation to her ; nor has she been previously alluded to, unless under the character of the woman clothed with the sun, or under the figure of the New Jerusalem. We delay at present, therefore, any further definition of what we suppose to be represented by her ; bearing in mind only that she must be an opposite of the woman in the wilderness, and that her array is an opposite of that of the harlot, as the saints are opposites of the *inhabitants* of the earth.

V. 9. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed (are) they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

Καὶ λέγει μοι· γράψον· μακάριοι οἱ εἰς τὸ δεῖπνον τοῦ γάμου τοῦ ἁγίου κεκλημένοι· καὶ λέγει μοι· οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι ἀληθινοὶ εἰσι τοῦ Θεοῦ.

§ 427. ‘And he saith unto me, write,’ &c.—The apostle on a previous occasion (Rev. xiv. 13) was told, in a similar manner, to *write*. It was then also a cause of blessedness of which he was to write, although apparently a kind of blessedness very different from the present. It was then said, “Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.” Now, those are said to be blessed who are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. We suppose these to be only two different figures of the same cause of beatitude. To die in the Lord is to be identified with Christ, (§ 337,) or to be so accounted in the sight of God—dead indeed as to the matter of sin or condemnation, but living to God in Jesus Christ, (Rom. vi. 11.) So, to be called to the supper of the feast of the Lamb, (marriage feast understood,) is equivalent to partaking of the elements of that feast, the bread and the wine, the flesh and the blood, or the righteousness and the atonement of Christ ; the guest being accounted, *quoad hoc*, identified with the host, so long as the two dwell together, (§ 110.)

Here, however, we suppose principles, and not disciples, to be primarily alluded to. This marriage supper, or feast, is a manifestation of the union between the Lamb and that which is represented by the bride. Marriage is a rite pre-eminently identifying two parties, the husband and wife, making of both one. Such was the original purpose and effect of the institution, as we are informed by the inspired writer, (Gen. ii. 24.) Such was contemplated to be its purpose and effect in the times of the apostles, and by Jesus Christ himself, and such has been the universal construction put upon this mysterious connection, legally and practically, throughout the world. The celebration of a marriage feast is the manifestation of this *identity* ; the guests at the feast bearing their testimony to the fact that the parties have been thus lawfully united—that henceforth they are to be accounted identic, being no more twain but one flesh.



Those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb apocalyptically, we accordingly suppose to be those elements of doctrine, or of revelation, bearing testimony to this identity of the Lamb with his bride. They are personified as human guests invited to a marriage feast, for the purpose of illustration, and are therefore termed *blessed* or *happy*. So, as if anticipating the question from the apostle, Who are these blessed individuals? his angelic companion informs him, “These are the true sayings of God.” The *true sayings of God* being the words or elements of divine revelation, all these words, elements or doctrines, (as we have them in the sacred Scriptures,) are the chosen, selected instruments of proclaiming and bearing testimony to the mystic union in contemplation; and, as such, are spoken of as persons called or invited to a feast: probably the same elements as those represented by the one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed ones, with the name of the Father of the Lamb written in their foreheads.

We are confirmed in this suggestion by the consideration that no part of sacred Scripture can be more true than another; neither can truth itself, as a predicate of matters of revelation, be subject to degrees of comparison. All the sayings of God, as we have them in his written word, must be true, although clothed in the language of fiction; and if we would draw any distinction in this respect, the terms employed in relation to this marriage-supper of the Lamb are as evidently figurative as any other portion of the book.

V. 10. And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See (thou do it) not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Καὶ ἔπεσον ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ προσκυνῆσαι αὐτῷ· καὶ λέγει μοι· ὅρα μή· σύνδουλός σου εἰμὶ καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου τῶν ἔχόντων τὴν μαρτυρίαν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ· τῷ θεῷ προσκύνησον· ἡ γὰρ μαρτυρία τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐστὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς προφητείας.

§ 428. ‘And I fell at his feet,’ &c.—That is, apparently, at the feet of the angel, mentioned Rev. xvii. as one, or as the *first* of those having the seven vials; this angel being now about to quit the apostle, although perhaps to reappear, as we find from Rev. xxi. 9. The present scene is drawing to a close, preparatory to the presentation of a different spectacle. The mistake of the apostle in his act of prostration, and the admonition of the angel, may be intended to place in a prominent point of view what may be called the definition of the testimony of Jesus. The angel describes himself to be a fellow-servant of the apostle, especially as being with him an instrument of developing the mysteries of the gospel. The messenger is put for the message—the revelation of truth, represented by the pouring out of either of these vials, is a message bearing testimony to the character and offices of Christ in his works of redemption. The same may be said of all prophecy, and of all interpretation of prophecy; the

prophet or the interpreter being put for the message or development made through his instrumentality, the real messengers, or angels, are the truths revealed. The spirit, or true meaning of the prophecy, is the testimony to be relied upon—the testimony of Jesus; the messenger, whether angel, or prophet, or teacher, is himself nothing. It is the testimony only which he bears, that is to be the subject of consideration. This testimony is entitled to reverence only so far as it emanates from God; and this, for the reason that God only is to be worshipped: all other beings are but instruments of revealing his will.

So it may be said of every expounder or commentator of the sacred volume, that he is but a servant in the same cause. It is the message (not the messenger) that is entitled to attention; and this only so far as it is that testimony of (concerning) Jesus which is in accordance with the *spirit* of prophecy, and in conformity with the word of God. As it is expressed by another *fellow-servant*, (2 Cor. iii. 5, 6,) “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; who hath made us able ministers of the new testament; *not of the letter, but of the spirit*: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.” The *spirit*, especially of prophecy, as distinguished from the letter, is the testimony of Jesus: Babylon being held guilty of the blood of prophets and saints, inasmuch as she had suppressed this *spirit*, or testimony, (§ 420.)

The testimony of Jesus must be the things concerning him and his doctrine: as, in his walk to Emmaus with two of his disciples, before alluded to, he showed them all that the prophets had spoken of his sufferings and his glory, expounding and explaining no doubt the design of these sufferings and the nature of this glory; and this, in a manner to *warm their hearts* with the recital, or rather with the application of it; for of the facts they had themselves been eye-witnesses. That he was wounded for *their* transgressions, and bruised for *their* iniquities, was a view of the subject entirely new to them; the *spirit*, and not the letter of this testimony, causing their hearts to burn within them as he opened to them the Scriptures, (Luke xxiv. 32.)

Corresponding with our views of this whole book of Revelation, as announced at the commencement of these remarks, (§ 2,) we take it for granted that this *testimony* of Jesus is not a matter of church history, or a prophetic narration of events, political or ecclesiastical, in the bringing about of which men are to be the principal actors. It is an exhibition of the *doctrine* of Jesus. An illustration of the doctrine of God's plan of salvation. The apostle's mistake may be supposed to have arisen from the apprehension that the angel had been revealing those secret things which belong only to the Most High, and that consequently he must be himself a

personification of the Deity, God manifest in Christ, on which account it is that he falls down to worship; for we cannot suppose him intentionally to have *bowed down to worship* any other being than God.\*

#### THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON.

Vs. 11-13. And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat upon him (was) called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes (were) as a flame of fire, and on his head (were) many crowns [diadems]; and he had a name written, that no man knew but himself. And he (was) clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and his name is called The Word of God.

Καὶ εἶδον τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνεῳγμένον, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἵππος λευκός, καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ἐπ' αὐτὸν καλούμενος πιστὸς καὶ ἀληθινός, καὶ ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ κρίνει καὶ πολεμεῖ· οἱ δὲ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτοῦ ὡς φλὸς πυρός, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ διαδήματα πολλὰ· ἔχων ὄνομα γεγραμμένον, ὃ οὐδεὶς οἶδεν εἰ μὴ αὐτός, καὶ περιβεβλημένος ἱμάτιον βεβαμμένον αἵματι· καὶ καλεῖται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ· ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ.

§ 429. "And I saw heaven opened."—We are now to carry our thoughts back to the state of things as they appeared on the pouring out of the sixth vial, (Rev. xv. 14-16.) We then left the kings of the earth gathered together, as in battle array, in a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. The *gathering* was brought about through the instrumentality of the spirits unclean as frogs from the mouths of the dragon, of the beast, and of the false prophet; but the efficient cause of the assemblage was the purpose of the Almighty God. We were then told, too, that He (the Lord) was to come as a thief—that is, to meet these powers of the earth in the battle of the great day. After this, our attention was called to the effects of the pouring out of the seventh vial—the earthquake, the thunder, and the hail, the fall of the cities of the nations, and the falling asunder of the three parts of the great city. All these may be considered concomitants of the preparation for the great battle, adding, as we may imagine, desperation to the purpose of the kings, whose cities are thus overthrown, and whose subjects are blaspheming God on account of the exceeding great plague of the *hail*.

We were not however then made acquainted with the arrangements of the force to be brought against these kings; we could only presume that such

\* This verse should have closed the chapter; the recital of the destruction of the false system, represented by the Harlot and Babylon, having here terminated with the choral scene of rejoicing, in which a summary view is taken of the blessed results of this triumphant manifestation of truth. We consider the seventh and eighth verses of this chapter as bringing us up to the eve of the marriage celebration, for which the Lamb's bride is said to be prepared; nearly equivalent in the process of development to the first and second verses of the twenty-first chapter.



arrangements were in preparation. Nor did we then learn the character and power of the champion destined to lead this opposing force; we were only admonished that his coming would be sudden and unexpected.

In this stage of the revelation, our minds were summoned away with the apostle to the wilderness; and we have since been occupied with the *episodical* narrative of the decline and fall of Babylon in the duplex character under which she has been placed before us. We suppose, figuratively speaking, her final destruction, unless the two figures are equivalents, to synchronize with the issue of the great battle now about to be witnessed, although in the account we have had of her no allusion at all is made to that battle. If we were to sketch a representation of the scene as we suppose it should be depicted, while we place in front of the picture the rout of the forces under the command of the Beast, and the victorious career of the Rider of the white horse, we should give in the background a view of the burning city, with the smoke of its ruins, amidst the lamentations of the spectators, rising up forever and ever.

On former occasions the apostle had seen a door opened in heaven—he had seen the temple and the tabernacle opened in heaven, and he had seen different exhibitions as from heaven, or in heaven; but this is the first time in which he tells us that he saw *heaven opened*. This expression we accordingly consider the designation of an extraordinary revelation or development of truth.

Henceforth (*ἀπ' ἄρτι*), from this time, it was said to Nathaniel, ye shall see *heaven opened*, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man. To see heaven opened is, we apprehend, as before suggested, (§114,) to enjoy a spiritual discernment of the whole view of divine government presented by revelation. To see the angels of God ascending and descending upon (concerning) the Son of man, is to enjoy a like discernment of the gradual development of the mystery of Jesus; as to see the Son of man descending from heaven, is to see Jesus in his true character as the Lord our righteousness. So we may consider the *opening of heaven*, in the present passage, to be a revelation of the character and attributes of Christ as he is here described, under the figure of a warlike champion issuing forth to a contest, of the result of which He has no occasion to be doubtful.

§ 430. ‘And behold a white horse,’ &c.—At the opening of the first seal (Rev. vi. 2) a white horse was also seen, and he that sat upon him was said to go forth armed with a bow and furnished with a victor's crown, conquering and to conquer. In the present case, although the rider is differently described, we can have little doubt but that the two figures refer to the same champion. In both, the sustaining power, the horse, is of the same appearance; this animal being the war-horse or charger, (§ 146,) and, as such, a part of the equipment or armour of the combatant. In this, as

in the first case, we suppose the *white horse* to represent the power of divine righteousness; this righteousness being the same, whether exercised in the work of salvation, or exhibited in the manifestation of that work. The sinner is saved, and saved only through the intervention of the merits of Christ, by the imputation of which he is justified in the sight of God; and the error of self-justification—the error of the whole system of the reign of *self*—is to be overcome by a just exhibition of the process of this intervening righteousness.

There are two kinds of contest contemplated in this Apocalypse, in which Christ is engaged, as we have before intimated: one in which the element of propitiation overcomes the powers of the law. Here he is more particularly represented as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; although he is also represented, in the war in heaven, as Michael the conqueror of the accuser—overcoming the power of the accuser, and overcoming the powers of the law, being nearly equivalent figures. The other contest is that, in which the *manifestation* of the truths pertaining to this salvation is to overcome all opposite errors upon the subject, and especially the errors represented by the kingdom of the beast, (self,) and of all connected with the monster.

This last contest we suppose to be that in which the rider of the white horse is now about to engage; the exhibition of the saving power of divine righteousness being as necessary to overcome the errors of self-exaltation, as the exercise of that righteousness in behalf of the sinner is necessary to overcome the powers of condemnation: accordingly, the figure of the white horse is equally appropriate in both representations.

‘And he that sat upon him (was) called Faithful and True.’—That is, such are his attributes; his name being spoken of afterwards—as it is said, 1 John i. 9, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” The faithfulness and even the justice of Christ (of God in Christ) is manifested by his fulfilment of his own free and gracious promises of pardon. An unjust magistrate might induce the confession of a criminal by promises of mercy, and afterwards use that confession against him for his ruin. But Jesus is *faithful*. He calls upon the sinner to unburden himself of his guilt by a free admission of it, and he has promised *rest* (relief) to all who thus lay their burden at his feet.

He is *true*—he is the truth itself. In Christ there is a fountain opened for the washing away of all sin and uncleanness, and all that come unto this fountain shall be washed and cleansed. This is the *truth* as it is in Jesus; and to come unto Christ, is to come to this truth—to come to that which is pre-eminently true.

As in any ordinary contest between two contending parties as to the

validity of their rights, it is all-important that they should each establish a character for veracity ; so here the champion is represented to be going forth to a contest (a contest in effect between truth and error) with the important qualification of a character of fidelity and truth—so much so as to be known especially by the *title*, “ Faithful and True.”

‘ And in righteousness he doth judge and make war.’—Or *with, by means of* (*iv*) righteousness or justice, shall he discriminate and contend ; for it is a *polemical* exhibition that is about to be made ; as it is said, Is. xxviii. 17, “ Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet.” As the plummet in the hand of the architect, so is righteousness with this combatant the instrument or means of discrimination—not only of judging, but of manifesting judgment. The effect of exhibiting the character and nature of true righteousness, is to show the deficiency of all that comes short of it ; so, by showing the extent of that righteousness which the law requires, the impossibility of fulfilling this legal requisition by *human* merits is exhibited, and the call for bringing in an everlasting righteousness is made manifest.

§ 431. ‘ His eyes (were) as a flame of fire.’—The figure of the champion is here identified with the form of the Son of man seen in the midst of the golden candlesticks, Rev. i. 13 ; his eyes of flame (§ 30) indicating instruments of trial : the eyes of Him that looketh upon the heart—of Him who trieth the motive of the action, as well as the deed itself.

‘ And on his head (were) many crowns ;’ or rather, diadems, (§§ 272, 294 ;)—the word translated *many* signifying not merely several, but a large number, a multitude. The dragon bore seven diadems, the beast ten, the rider of the white horse a *multitude*. The two first had certain limited tokens of sovereignty ; the tokens or evidences of supreme power of the last are unlimited, infinite. A warrior going forth upon his charger could not be spoken of as seated upon a throne. In place of this figure, therefore, the infinite number of his diadems sets forth his attribute of *sovereignty* ; and this attribute is one of the weapons by which he maintains the contest, and obtains the victory : he could not do either without it. So, without a just exhibition of the sovereignty of God, the truth of salvation by grace cannot be manifested, nor the errors of self-justification overcome.

‘ And he had a name written, that no man [no one] knew but himself.’—Not his own name, but a name perhaps peculiarly cherished and known only to him. His own name is expressly announced in the next verse. The diadem was a band or fillet, capable of having a name embroidered upon it. We suppose, although it is not so expressed, this name to be written upon the multitude of diadems—the same name upon all of them ; as the beast from the sea had the *one name* of blasphemy upon his seven heads. The



name blasphemy, was characteristic of the pretensions of the beast : the name upon these diadems must characterize something intimately connected with these numerous evidences of sovereignty. There may be an allusion to this name in the prediction, Isaiah lxii. 2, 3 : “ And thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name ;” the wearing of this name in the diadem being also a figure equivalent to that indicated by the expression, Is. xlix. 16 : “ I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.” So the high priest was to bear not his own name, but the names of the children of Israel upon his two shoulders, (Ex. xxviii. 9–12, and 21.) There may be also an allusion to the same name, Jer. xxxiii. 16, as the name granted to the peculiar object of divine favour. As the name, however, is declared to be known only to Him who knoweth all things, we cannot be expected to define it. On the other hand, we do not suppose the mention of it to have been introduced without the design of encouraging our investigations with respect to it. The name, as well as its opposite, that of the beast, must remain for the present untold.

§ 432. ‘ And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood.’—Some light may be thrown on this passage by comparing it with a corresponding picture presented by the prophet Isaiah, (Is. lxiii. 1–4.)

“ Who is he that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah ? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength ?

“ I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

“ Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat ?

“ I have trodden the wine-press alone ; and of the people [nations or Gentiles, *τῶν ἐθνῶν*, Sept.] there was none with me : for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury ; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.”

It seems strange that He who thus speaks of himself as mighty to save, should immediately afterwards declare his determination to destroy, and this with vengeance and fury ; while, at the same time, the reason given for this exhibition of wrath is, that the year of the redeemed has come. We can adopt no other construction than that of supposing this vengeance to be directed, not against the sinner, (the subject of redemption,) but against the principles of error misrepresenting the work of this redemption ; and thus throwing a stumbling-block in the way of disciples, and robbing God of the glory especially due to Him as a Saviour.

This appears more distinctly by referring to a previous passage, (Is. lix. 14–17,) where the prevalence of error is particularly the subject of com-

plaint ; and seems to be assigned as the cause of a manifestation of truth, of the same character as that under consideration. “ And judgment,” it is said, “ is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off : for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter ; yea, truth faileth, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey,” (“ is accounted mad,” *margin* ;) “ and the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment :”—*because there was no discrimination between truth and error*, *ὅτι οὐκ ἦν κρίσις* ; and therefore, apparently, it is added, “ he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation upon his head,” &c. The exhibition of the means by which God’s work of salvation has been wrought, being the weapon for overcoming and destroying the errors in contemplation.

As the name Edom signifies *red*, *earthy*, or *bloody*,\* and as Bozrah was a city of Edom, we suppose the figure of *coming from Edom* to be equivalent to a coming from man’s position under the law ; the position of the sinner obnoxious to the penalty of the broken law. To come from Edom with garments dyed *red*, must be equivalent to bearing the evidence of having endured this penalty. The prophet, accordingly, is supposed in spirit to be addressing the Redeemer subsequently to the completion of his propitiatory work : a work performed by him alone—a work in which no element of human merit, *no Gentile power*, had a part. As he says of the nations, or Gentiles, *there was not a man with me*, τῶν ἐθνῶν οὐκ ἔστιν ἀνὴρ μετ’ ἐμοῦ, (Sept.) And yet it would appear that these very Gentiles, or self-righteous principles, claimed the glory of the work ; and for this reason are represented as making war against the Redeemer. Therefore it is, that after having trodden the wine-press alone, the year of his redeemed being come, when the truth of salvation by grace is to be manifested, the Author of that salvation now goes forth to vindicate the truth ; putting on for this purpose the garments of vengeance for a clothing, and being clad with zeal as a cloak ; exhibiting at the same time his *dyed garments* as the evidences wherewith to vindicate his title to the glory of the only Redeemer. We suppose the circumstances, and attributes, and object of the Rider of the white horse, in this passage of the Apocalypse, to be parallel with this representation of the prophet. The work of redemption has been accomplished ; the vesture dipped in blood bears testimony to it. But the nations, (the Gentiles,) the elements of self-righteousness—pretended powers of human merit—these claim the glory of the work of salvation for the beast ; (self.) They have arrayed themselves under his standard, and, led by their ruling principles, (the kings of the earth,) they are now set in order of battle on the field of Armageddon against the Lord, and against his Anointed. The

\* Edom עֲדָם *Rufus, sive terrenus, aut sanguineus*, (Onomas. Leusden.)

very peculiarity of the array—the enemy being summoned by unclean spirits from the *mouhths* of the accuser, the beast and the false prophet, and, as we shall find, being headed by the beast—affords evidence that the object of the expedition now describing, is to vindicate truth and to suppress error.

§ 433. ‘And his name is called the Word of God,’ (ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ.)—This appellation, as we have already noticed, (§ 147,) is peculiarly adapted to a personification of the Deity; the Word of God being put for the decision of the divine mind, as the word of man expresses the decision of the human mind. *The going forth* of the Word of God may be put for the act of execution, or for that of revelation. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all of the host of them by the breath of his mouth: here the *word* went forth in its execution—the work of creation:—as it is also said, Heb. xi. 3, The worlds were framed by the *word of God*. There is a like going forth of the mind of God in the works of his providence, *upholding all things by the Word of his power*. “He sendeth forth his commandments, and his *word* runneth very swiftly.” So, in the work of redemption, the same Word went forth, when He who was the express image of the Father was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us;—when he died for our sins, and was raised for our justification. Or, rather, this was a going forth in the work of *manifestation*: the Word of God virtually going forth in the work of redemption, in every instance in which his righteousness is imputed to the objects of his mercy for their justification.

Besides this, the Word of God goes forth in every revelation made of the decision of the divine mind. The promulgation of the glad tidings of salvation is a *going forth* of the *Word of God*. The peculiar inspiration with which prophets and apostles have been favoured, is a *going forth* of the Word of God. The *editing* and circulation of the sacred Scriptures—from the line first committed to writing, to the stereotyped millions of copies which now cover the earth—are a going forth of the *Word of God*. So the exposition and development of the true meaning of these Scriptures, wherever these are made, and whatever may be the instrumentality, are a going forth of the Word of God. This last we suppose to be more especially that *going forth* contemplated in this representation of the Apocalypse; the development of the peculiar truths of the mystery of redemption constituting that going forth of the Word, which is here represented by the action of the Rider of the white horse.

We must judge of the nature of the going forth by the occasion on which the figure is employed. Here, the occasion is a contest with the beast and false prophet, and the forces under their command; a contest between truth and error. A peculiar revelation of the *decision* of the divine mind, in reference to the plan of redemption, is the display of sove-



reign power here called for. The work of salvation has been accomplished ; it remains only to manifest its truth by a development necessarily resulting in the destruction of every opposing error.

Vs. 14-16. And the armies (which were) in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations : and he shall rule them with a rod of iron ; and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on (his) vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Καὶ τὰ στρατεύματα τὰ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ἠκολούθει αὐτῷ ἐφ' ἵπποις λευκοῖς, ἐνδεδυμένοι βύσσινον λευκὸν καθαγόν. Καὶ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ ἐκπορεύεται ῥομφαία ὀξεῖα, ἵνα ἐν αὐτῇ πατάξῃ τὰ ἔθνη· καὶ αὐτὸς ποιμανεῖ αὐτοὺς ἐν ῥάβδῳ σιδηρᾷ, καὶ αὐτὸς πατεῖ τὴν ληνὸν τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς ὀργῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ παντοκράτορος. Καὶ ἔχει ἐπὶ τὸ ἱμάτιον καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν μηρὸν αὐτοῦ ὄνομα γεγραμμένον· βασιλεὺς βασιλέων καὶ κύριος κυρίων.

§434. 'And the armies,' &c.—As the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, the Word of God accomplished the work of redemption alone. What we have now to contemplate, however, is not the work itself, but the revelation of it. In this revelation all the powers of heaven are represented as being engaged. All the elements of the representation of divine government, figuratively termed heaven, co-operate with the going forth of the *Word* in the manifestation and vindication of evangelical truth. Both the leader and his armies are sustained by the same exhibition of divine righteousness ; the auxiliary elements of gospel truth depending upon the principle of salvation by imputed righteousness for their own efficacy and power, as the warrior depends upon his horse.

So too they appear clothed in the same imputed perfection ;\* the exhibition of this raiment being to them an armour or means of defence ; as every element of doctrine belonging to God's plan of salvation depends for the evidence of its verity upon this characteristic, that it tends to exhibit the interposition of divine righteousness in behalf of the sinner, as the efficient instrument of justification.

The Leader is arrayed in a blood-red garment, while his followers are clothed in white robes. So Christ assumes the penalty, and wears the garb of the transgressor, in order that his followers may be clothed in the white robe of his righteousness ; as it is said of the multitudes spoken of, Rev. vii. 9,–15, These are they who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb ; and as, on the other hand, Jesus was arrayed by

\* The heavenly armies are arrayed not merely in *fine linen*, but in *fine linen white and clean*, or *white clean*. The term (*λευκὸν καθαγόν*) is not so significant of resplendent transparency, as that applied to the array of the wife of the Lamb, (*λαμπρὸν καθαγόν*;) and which is also employed in describing the attire of the seven angels from the temple, Rev. xv. 6 ; although their pure and white *linen* (*λινον*;) is not the *fine linen* (*βύσσινον*) said to be the righteousness of the saints, (Rev. xix. 8.)

the soldiers prior to his execution in a *purple* robe, in mockery on their part, but, according to the counsel of God, apparently to typify the penal consequences, of which he assumed the burden when he was “wounded for our transgressions,” and when “the Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all,” (Is. liii. 5.) The evidence of this *transmutation*, as we may call it, is itself a weapon with which the advocates of truth go forth to contend with their opponents, the beast, the false prophet, and his forces.

The term translated *armies* is said (Rob. Lex. 707) to signify sometimes, by implication, the body-guard of the commander-in-chief. In this particular the armies in heaven, as followers of the Word of God, may be equivalent to the one hundred and forty-four thousand attendants of the Lamb, (§ 326,) a chosen band of principles, the elements of the combined testimony of the old and new dispensations.

‘And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword.’—The sword of the Spirit—the revealed word of God, (Eph. vi. 17.) Not merely the decision of the divine mind, but the *revelation* of that decision; the one being put for the other. The sharp sword out of the *mouth* of the Word of God, we suppose to be the written word of God, in its proper spiritual sense; according with the idea already adopted of the nature of the controversy here represented—a manifestation of the true principles of redemption, through the instrumentality of the written word, brought to act upon the elements of an opposite system or systems. In the contest between the divine purpose of mercy and the requisitions of the law, the Lamb (the element of propitiation) is the instrument by which the latter is overcome, (Rev. xvii. 14,) and the accuser of the brethren is overcome by the blood of the Lamb, (Rev. xi. 11;) but, in the contest between truth and error, the *revealed* word is the weapon of the conqueror. The written word, even as ordinarily understood, may be said to be the sword of the Lord; but its *sharpness* is its spiritual sense. Indeed, unless understood in this latter sense, it can hardly be said to be *unsheathed* to human apprehension, (Ezek. xxi. 1–17, 28.) The sword from the mouth of the rider of the white horse is a *sharp* sword, drawn from its scabbard; it is the revealed word properly understood, piercing to the dividing asunder—discriminating between the natural and the spiritual meaning; or rather, when fully displayed, carrying with it these two meanings, corresponding with the action of the *two-edged* sword out of the mouth of the one like unto the Son of man, (Rev. 1. 16.)

§ 435. ‘That with it he should [or may] smite the nations.’—Strike down or beat down—*παράσσω* by implication sometimes signifying to *kill*; as, Acts vii. 24, *παράξας τὸν Αἰγύπτιον*, *He smote the Egyptian*. What the *nations* represent, may be gathered from the character of the weapon employed against them. They are to be smitten with the revelation of truth, the revealed word of God. They are not, therefore, political bodies, or

assemblages of human beings, but powers, as we have heretofore supposed them to be, of a system of error—the earthly system. The nations to be smitten are powers under the control of the kings or chiefs summoned together by the three spirits unclean as frogs. They are now gathered together at the place appointed, where they are to be met and smitten by Him, out of whose mouth the sharp sword proceedeth; an *oral* weapon: it is not even represented as wielded in the hand, or girt upon the thigh. In the employment of this weapon man may be an apparent instrument, but the power really in operation is the *Word of God*; as it is said, (Is. xl. 4,) “He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked”—“that Wicked, whom the Lord shall consume (as it is also said) with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming,” (2 Thess. ii. 8.) This last expression referring, as we apprehend, to the spiritual sense in which the word of divine revelation is to be understood; the same operation being sometimes represented as that of a *fire*, at others as that of an oral sword; as, (Is. ix. 6,) “For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire;” and, (Is. lxvi. 15, 16,) “For behold the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire; for by *fire* and by his *sword* will the Lord plead with all flesh, and the slain of the Lord shall be many.”

If we render the term nations by *Gentiles*, (§ 80,) the illustration will be the more obvious;—Gentiles standing in relation to the inhabitants of Jerusalem figuratively, as elements of all human systems of doctrine stand in relation to the principles of the divine economy of salvation. All elements not belonging to this true economy, must be smitten, destroyed, or overcome, when the truth is finally and fully manifested.

‘And he shall rule them with a rod of iron.’—The word rendered rule having a pastoral allusion, (§ 83,) the whole expression carries us back to the promise given to him that overcometh, (Rev. ii. 27.) The Saviour there promises to give to rule as he had received of his Father; we now see what he has received, (for this word of God is the same Word that was made flesh and dwelt among us, John i. 14.) We have before considered this rod as an emblem of complete and perfect sovereign sway. To say that the Deity, as such, has control over the nations of the earth, in the ordinary sense, would be the assertion of a mere truism. It is a position to be disputed by none but an Atheist. Taking these nations or Gentiles, however, as powers or elements of doctrinal systems, and contemplating this rod as some peculiar principle of the divine system of government, there seems to be a reason for revealing to us the fact that to this controlling prin-



ciple all others shall be manifested to be subordinate: as much so as a flock of sheep would be when under the guidance and direction of a shepherd leading and controlling them with an iron rod or staff. This staff in the hand of a shepherd we suppose to be equivalent to a sceptre in the hand of a king, (§ 276 ;) and, as it is said of the Most High, “A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom,” so we suppose this principle, employed as an instrument in controlling all other principles, to be what we term the element of imputable righteousness, or something of the same character; this element, so peculiar to the economy of grace, being that which manifests most directly the sovereignty of God.

§ 436. ‘And he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.’—Or, according to our Greek, He treadeth the wine-press of the wine of the vehemence of the wrath of God; this fierceness, or vehemence bearing, as appears from the Septuagint, the same signification as the term *fury*, in the picture presented by the prophet of the warrior from Edom. In that description the treading of the wine-press is spoken of in the past tense as something done, finished. Here, it appears to be something doing. The verb is in the present tense. If the allusion be to the Saviour’s work of atonement, this also may be spoken of, both as a thing done, and as continually being done. The interposition of the merits of Christ in behalf of the sinner is something continually in operation, as it is said, (Heb. vii. 25,) “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, *seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them* ;” this intercession being not a mere oral pleading, but a *virtual* intercession—the atonement and righteousness of Christ virtually and perpetually pleading for the pardon and justification of his people. In this sense he treadeth continually the wine-press of wrath, and performs the work alone; but we cannot suppose him to be represented on the present occasion as doing the same thing, or about to do the same thing with the aid of the armies of heaven.

In the contest with error, the fact of the continual virtual intercession of Christ, as above set forth, is an argument calculated to overcome a certain portion of the pretensions of self-justification; as if we supposed the polemical champions on the side of the beast to admit a full and sufficient atonement to have been once made by the Lamb, and the disciple on his first conversion to have availed himself of it; but subsequently to this they say, whatever sins he commits, he must atone for them himself. Here is an error to be combated by an exhibition of the truth, that this treading of the wine-press is a process, in the sight of God, in *continual* operation. The Leader of the heavenly armies, therefore, goes forth with this qualification. As his blood-stained garment, and the white robes of his followers, show the work of sub-

stitution to have been once accomplished ; so the fact, that the operation is *continual*, is equally a weapon of the advocates of the truth. We prefer this construction as most in keeping with the figure.

The warrior is going forth to the battle, and the enemies' forces are known to be assembled in a certain position ; but the two parties are not yet represented as having encountered each other. The WORD has the *sword of the Spirit*, that he *may*,\* or with which he *shall*, strike the nations : that is, when the great conflict takes place ; but he already treads the wine-press—which, indeed, is part of his preparation for the coming contest ; although it is not a part of the contest itself.

We suppose the only other construction would be, that this treading of the wine-press represents the execution of divine wrath, that the Word of God is here represented as the executive officer of infinite Justice, and that as such he is now going forth to execute wrath upon the enemies' host. If this be correct, this host is still that of the beast and the false prophet—of the evil principle *self*, and the delusive element, false interpretation. The forces under these two commanders (the beast and his *aid*) are erroneous principles, and not human beings ; and it is accordingly against these principles that this wrath is directed in the representation here made. There is no reason to suppose that the battle about being described represents the judgment, or the punishment to be administered in a future state of existence ; still less a defeat and slaughter of certain military forces of this world, in the ordinary sense of the term.

§ 437. 'And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written.'—The same vesture as that said to be dipped in blood ; the garment with the name upon it thus serving the warrior for a cuirass. The thigh, with the wrestler as well as with the treader of the wine-press, was probably considered the limb most calculated for an exhibition of strength. The Greek term (*μηρόρ*) may apply in this case to the upper part of the thigh, to which the sword was usually attached ; the girding of the sword upon the thigh being indicative of equipment for battle. Here the warrior, instead of a sword, exhibits his all-powerful *name*, or title—corresponding with the language of the Psalmist, "The *name* of the God of Jacob defend thee." "In the *name* of our God will we set up our banners." "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will remember the *name* of the Lord our God." Ps. xx. 1, 5, 7. And Prov. xviii. 10, "The *name* of the Lord is a strong tower." So the miracles performed by the apostles of Jesus Christ were done in his name—by the power or virtue of his name.

'King of kings, and Lord of lords.'—We have already had occasion to remark upon this name, (§ 395,) considering it, when applied to the Lamb,

\* Παράσση, according to some editions.

expressive of the ascendancy of the element of divine propitiation over every principle or element of legal requisition; the fact that the Lamb is Lord of lords and King of kings, being assigned as the reason for his overcoming the ten horns, (Rev. xvii. 14.) But there is still a further peculiarity of this name here developed. This title of the Lamb is asserted to be also the name of the Word of God: the name which is to serve in the present contest as the means both of offence and defence.

According to our usual association of ideas, the term *Lord of lords* appears to be something subordinate to that of King of kings, as we have ourselves before considered it only as equivalent to Master of masters; but it may have here a more important signification. The word *Kύριος*, (Lord,) although applied in the Septuagint promiscuously to God and man, is almost uniformly employed also to express the proper name of the true God, (Jehovah\*)—a name which the Jewish compilers of that version probably considered too sacred to be incorporated into a heathen language. They accordingly made use of the noun *Kύριος* to express the proper name *Jah*, and Jehovah, and Adonai-Jehovah, although on some occasions the term *ὁ θεός* (God) was sometimes used by them for the same purpose. It might be said of the Greeks in the times of the apostles, as it was said even of the early patriarchs, (Ex. vi. 3,) although they had learnt something of the true God, *by his name JEHOVAH he was not known to them*. The name was not known in the Greek language, and for this reason, perhaps, it does not appear in the New Testament. We cannot but suppose, however, that there is in that portion of the sacred writings an equivalent for it. Such an equivalent we think may be found in the name borne upon the vesture and the thigh of the rider of the white horse. It is the all-powerful name of *Jehovah of Hosts*, which gives to the blood-stained garment its protecting quality, and exhibits itself as an irresistible weapon on the thigh of the conqueror.

The representation here given us of the going forth of the Word of God, appears intended to illustrate the mysterious truth, that Jehovah our righteousness is the power by which the wine-press of wrath has been trodden; and that it is by the manifestation of this truth that the errors opposed to a just exhibition of the economy of grace are to be overcome. As it is said, (Ps. xliv. 5,) “Through thee (Jehovah) will we push down our enemies; *through thy name* will we tread them under that rise up against us.” The all-prevailing argument in favour of the economy of grace, is this important

\* *Kύριος*, *Domínus*, יהוה, *passim omnes*. Lex. Gr. ad Hexapla. }  
 יהוה *nomen veri Dei* (Rad. יהוה vel יהוה, *κύριος*, *Domínus*. } Index Heb. } Tromm.  
 יהוה *Idem* (Rad. יהוה *giroquai, sum*), *ὁ δυνάστης κύριος*, *Idem*. } et Chald. }  
 See also Concord. Tromm. Tom. I. 944.



truth, that the name of the perpetual Intercessor, Substitute, and Redeemer, is JEHOVAH of Hosts, the King of kings.

Vs. 17, 18. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come, and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all (men, both) free and bond, both small and great.

Καὶ εἶδον ἕνα ἄγγελον ἑστῶτα ἐν τῇ ἡλίῳ· καὶ ἔκραξε φωνῇ μεγάλῃ, λέγων πᾶσι τοῖς ὀρνέοις τοῖς πετομένοις ἐν μεσοννημῇ· δεῦτε, συνάχθητε εἰς τὸ δεῖπνον τοῦ μέγα τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα φάγητε σάρκας βασιλέων καὶ σάρκας χιλιάρχων καὶ σάρκας ἰσχυρῶν, καὶ σάρκας ἵππων καὶ τῶν καθήμενων ἐπ' αὐτῶν, καὶ σάρκας πάντων ἐλευθέρων τε καὶ δούλων, καὶ μικρῶν καὶ μεγάλων.

§ 438. 'And I saw an angel,' &c.—Having completed a description of the heavenly force with its divine Leader, and the earthly powers having been previously set forth, (Rev. xvi. 14,) we now come to what may be termed the proclamation of defiance, as by the voice of a herald, on the eve of a general engagement.

The appearance of the *sun* we suppose to be symbolical of a manifestation of Christ, the Sun of righteousness. An angel or messenger, standing in the sun, may be supposed to be equivalent to the revelation of some principle of truth—some element of doctrine indicating the approaching destruction of the errors, and systems of errors, represented by those whose flesh is thus to be devoured or consumed. The crying of the angel with a *loud voice*, is indicative of the powerful nature of the revelation made.

'Saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven;' or, in the *mid-heaven*, (§ 205.)—The birds thus addressed are carnivorous birds, (*ὄρνεοι*.) As such they would appear to be of the same genus as the unclean and hateful bird domiciled in the ruins of Babylon, but there may be a difference between these birds encaged in that city of desolation, and those flying in the midst of heaven. If we consider the mid-heaven a revelation equivalent to that of the legal dispensation, or to an exhibition of divine government peculiar to that dispensation, we may then consider these birds of prey as legal elements, principles of law, by which all pretensions of human merit are necessarily tried. The unclean and hateful birds of Babylon are legal elements, nourished by and confined to a mixed system.\*

'Come, gather yourselves together to the supper of the great God;' or, according to some editions, Come, assemble to the great supper of God. The supper of the ancient Hebrews being the principal meal of the day,

\* The birds flying in the midst of heaven, or *birds of the air*, may be such as the eagle, vulture, &c.; carnivorous birds flying at a great height from the earth. The unclean birds dwelling in Babylon may be such as the owl, the pelican, and the bat, animals of a mixed character, keeping near the earth. Both are unfit for food, but the latter are especially an abomination, Lev. xi. 13-20.

(§ 110.) The word *γάμος*, indicative of a feast, is not here employed. The supper is a feast to these mid-heaven elements, but the occasion is not that with which the idea of festal enjoyment can be associated; it is an opposite or converse of the marriage feast. At the same time, as to cause and effect, the two occasions are identic; the manifestation of truth causing the destruction of error, and the destruction of error being a means of the exhibition of truth; the same result affording a festal scene to one party and an occasion of dismay and despair to the other.

‘*The supper of the great God*’ may be considered a term in contradistinction to the supper of the Lamb; the difference being equivalent to that between the attribute of divine justice and the attribute of sovereign mercy, or between the wine of the wrath of God, and the *new* wine of propitiation.

‘That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains,’ &c.—This figure reminds us of the action of the ten horns in the destruction of the harlot, (Rev. xvii. 16;) as it is said, they shall eat her flesh, &c. Flesh we suppose to be a figure of righteousness or moral perfection—merits, either real or pretended, as means of justification in the sight of God, (§ 397.) The word in the original is in the plural, corresponding with the prophet’s term of righteousnesses, and with the *δικαιώματα* of Paul, (Rom. ii. 27.) The use of the term here is evidently applicable to false pretensions, such as cannot withstand the requisitions of the law. These kings, captains, mighty men, horses and their riders, men bond and free, small and great, apparently represent false doctrines, or principles of such doctrines, of every grade and variety; their *fleshes* being the *means of justification* they severally profess to furnish. The time has now come when these erroneous principles are to be put to the test; the day of the LORD’S vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion, (Is. xxxiv. 8; lxiii. 4:)—the great day of discrimination, the period of retributive discrimination, *Ἡμέρα κρίσεως Κυρίου, καὶ ἐναντὶς ἀνταποδόσεως κρίσεως Σιών.*

The trial about to be represented as a great battle, is identic with that elsewhere spoken of as a trial by the agency of fire; the birds of prey are such as are usually known to accompany large armies on their march, and especially to hover over them on the eve of battle, and during the conflict. The language of the herald is a figure of speech expressive of the certainty with which the speaker contemplates the defeat and slaughter of the enemy; the giving of the flesh to birds of prey implying the previous slaughter of those whose flesh was to be thus given—“Come to me,” said the boasting Goliath, “and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.” So, in the curses for disobedience, (Deut. xxviii. 26,) “The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies,” . . . “and thy carcass shall be meat unto all the fowls of the air, and unto the beasts

of the earth, and no man shall fray them away." The implied prediction of the herald that the *flesh* of these armies shall be entirely consumed, implies, also, the previous slaughter by the sword out of the mouth of the Word of God. The crisis here contemplated is sarcastically spoken of as a supper. As such it may be considered an opposite of the *feast of fat things* alluded to Is. xxvi. 6. So far, however, we have only reached the summons to these mid-heaven elements, to prepare themselves for the exercise of their peculiar functions; their appellation (carnivorous birds) reminding us of the answer to the question, "Where, Lord?" in reference to the coming of the Son of man, (Luke xvii. 37.) "Whosoever the body is, thither will the *eagles* be gathered together,"—wherever the error prevails, there will be the contest for truth, and there the elements of falsehood will be consumed.

V. 19. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

Καὶ εἶδον τὸ θηρίον καὶ τοὺς βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς καὶ τὰ στρατεύματα αὐτῶν συνηγμένα, ποιῆσαι πόλεμον μετὰ τοῦ καθιμένον ἐπὶ τοῦ ἵππου καὶ μετὰ τοῦ στρατεύματος αὐτοῦ.

§ 439. 'And I saw,' &c.—Immediately after the pouring out of the sixth vial, the apostle learned the fact (Rev. xvi. 14, and 16) that the kings of the earth and of the whole world, summoned through the instrumentality of certain unclean spirits, were collected together by Almighty power into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. He did not then see this gathering. His eyes are now open to behold the whole battle array. In this array the beast appears as commander-in-chief; for the dragon had given his power unto the beast, (Rev. xiii. 2;) and although the principal instigator of the war, he (the dragon) may be said to act in this scene only in the beast: not appearing himself personally. The false prophet (the grand vizier and acting commander) is supposed of course to accompany his master; a supposition confirmed by the statement in the subsequent verse.

As we take the beast to be a principle in the heart of man virtually setting itself up in its pretensions in opposition to Jehovah, and as we suppose the false prophet to represent a false construction of revelation, sustaining this blasphemous principle in man, so we consider the kings of the earth and their armies as subordinate powers of the beast, with their auxiliary principles,—standing in relation to the beast as earthly kings or chiefs might be contemplated in relation to a leader of *imperial* dignity. The kings are subordinate to the beast, though ruling in their respective spheres; as the seven heads of the beast might be resolved into seven leading principles of *self-exaltation*, constituting the element which, for want of a more significant



appellation, we denominate *self*. The seven heads, as we have before observed, may represent a totality. All the kings of the earth, that is, all kings of a certain kind—or, if this were not understood of the number *seven*, the same idea of totality might be derived from the expression employed in the sixteenth chapter—the kings of the earth, and of the whole world.

‘Gathered together to make war against,’ &c.; or, to make battle—*ποιῆσαι πόλεμον*—not merely to take counsel, but to fight; the crisis having now arrived for an actual collision. The apostle had accompanied, in vision, the armies of heaven until they reached the spot where the enemy was to be encountered; the conflict itself may be presumed to take place immediately afterwards.

Vs. 20, 21. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which (sword) proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

Καὶ ἐπιάσθη τὸ θηρίον, καὶ ὁ μετ' αὐτοῦ ψευδοπροφήτης ὁ ποιήσας τὰ σημεῖα ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, ἐν οἷς ἐπλάνησε τοὺς λαβόντας τὸ χάραγμα τοῦ θηρίου καὶ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας τῇ εἰκόνι αὐτοῦ· ζῶντες ἐβλήθησαν οἱ δύο εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός τὴν καιομένην ἐν θεῷ. Καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ ἀπεκτάνθησαν ἐν τῇ ῥομφαίᾳ τοῦ καθήμενου ἐπὶ τοῦ ἵππου, τῇ ἐξεληθούσῃ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ, καὶ πάντα τὰ ὄρνευ ἐχορτάσθησαν ἐκ τῶν σαρκῶν αὐτῶν.

§ 440. ‘And the beast was taken,’ &c.—In the account of a human victory, in proportion to its magnitude, we should have a minute detail of the manner in which the battle was fought—the manœuvring of the hostile parties, with the alternations of success and defeat, in different portions of the battle-ground. Here nothing of the kind is to be met with. The mixed multitude of earthly opponents, with their earthly leaders, have to contend, as in a pitched battle, with the chosen band of the King of kings, led on by their divine commander. It is unnecessary to relate the issue, or to state on which side victory declared itself; the only inquiry to be made being such as may relate to the fate of the vanquished. The sententious brevity of the Roman, *veni, vidi, vici*, would contain on this occasion a redundant particular. As in the *beginning* God said, Let there be light, and there was light, so no sooner is the *Word of God* revealed, as here represented, than all the powers of darkness are overcome.

The Greek term rendered *taken*, is one applied to the taking of wild beasts in a snare. The beast and false prophet are both taken as in a snare. Of the nature of this snare we may form some idea by comparing the result of this battle with the language of the prophet, (Is. xxiv. 17, 18:): “Fear, and the pit, and the *snare* are upon thee, *O inhabitant of the earth*, . . . . for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake.” The opening of these windows from on high can be

nothing else than a peculiar revelation of truth, and it is such a revelation or exhibition of divine truth that operates as a snare in taking these leading elements of error. Their true character—the character of the system they advocate—is manifested by a counter manifestation of the opposite system of truth. Thus, like the wicked, they fall by their own snare, (Ps. ix. 16;) a crisis apparently alluded to Luke xxi. 35: “For as a snare shall it (the kingdom of God) come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth,”—the inhabitants of the earth; not because there is a deception in it, but because the destruction is sudden and unexpected, like that of a snare. These false principles or elements, (the beast and false prophet,) whatever they may be, are taken by a manifestation of the Word of God, with the peculiar attributes of that Word; and the weapon with which they are overcome, is the *sharp sword* out of the mouth of that Word. We cannot suppose this narration to be capable of any other construction than that here put upon it, viz., taking it as detailing the effect of a peculiar revelation of religious truth upon an opposite system of errors. This construction corresponds with that applied to the fate of the harlot, and of the great city; and we suppose this battle to be but another figure of the same crisis.

‘And with him the false prophet that wrought miracles,’ &c.—There is a particular recurrence here to the mischief produced by this instrument of false interpretation, as if to give a reason why the same fate should be experienced by both of these elements; the power of the one depending upon, or being carried into effect by the delusive practices of the other. The remarks already made on the subject render it unnecessary to enlarge further upon it here.

‘These both were cast alive into a lake burning with fire and brimstone.’—The beast with seven heads and ten horns, and the false prophet or beast with two horns, are not human beings, neither are they animals in a literal sense; they are figurative things, and being so, the lake into which they are cast must be something figurative. Our common version employs the indefinite article in designating this lake, as do also the Geneva, Cranmer, and Tyndale versions: “These both were cast into a ponde of fyre burnynge with brymstone,” as if governed by the consideration that no such lake had been previously mentioned. The original, however, uniformly, we believe, has the *definite* article, with which the rendering of Wiclif accords: “These tweyne werun sent quyk in to *the* pool of fier brennyng with brymston.” So, also, the version of Rheims, as if referring to a lake previously known to exist.

There is no previous mention of a lake of this description, either in the Apocalypse or in any other part of the Old or New Testament; but there is a preparation of fire and brimstone alluded to Rev. xiv. 10, 11, as the

instrument of the never-ending torture of those that worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in the forehead or in the hand; and with this *preparation* we may identify *the lake* here spoken of. We have already defined our idea of the action of fire, in the apocalyptic sense, in trying the truth or falsehood of elements of doctrine; and have given our reasons for supposing brimstone or sulphur, when spoken of in connection with fire, to indicate the eternal and perpetual action of this trial. On the present occasion, immediately upon the signal defeat of a great army, a *lake* of fire and brimstone is more in keeping with the whole figure than a *furnace* would be, and it may be for this reason that the term *lake* is here adopted. A lake or pond signifying a large stagnant body of liquid, such a body of fire and sulphur is equivalent as a figure to an immense furnace of unquenchable fire—a refiner's fire unceasingly and eternally in action;—a fire representing, we apprehend, the continual test of the revealed word of God (the law and the testimony) rightly understood. To such a test the errors represented by the beast and false prophet are to be perpetually exposed, after having been once detected and overcome, through the instrumentality of the revelation implied in this action of the sword proceeding out of the mouth of the Word of God. In fine, we suppose the “lake of fire and brimstone” to be identic with the *fire which is to try every man's work*; a figure to which we have repeatedly had occasion to advert. Whatever this lake be, it must be something into which the element represented by the beast with seven heads and ten horns, and that represented by the false prophet or beast with two horns, as well as death and hell, (Rev. xx. 14,) are capable of being cast: of course, we cannot but suppose it to be something else than that which is ordinarily understood as the place of future punishment in the usual sense of the term.

§ 441. ‘And the remnant were slain [killed] with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which (sword) proceeded out of his mouth.’—There is a peculiar exactness of expression here, as if intended to guard against the possibility of misconception. The instrument of destruction is particularly designated as the sword, which came out of the mouth, *τῆ ἐξεληθείσης ἐκ τοῦ στόματος*. Had this not been specified, it might have been surmised that the conqueror had some other sword besides the one thus mentioned. A sword in his *hand* might have implied a different kind of destruction from that here in contemplation; but we are now expressly restricted in our ideas of this sword to the action of an *oral* weapon; that is, to the effect of a divine revelation—a peculiar exhibition of truth. This remnant, therefore, whatever it be, must be something destructible by such a weapon; it must also consist, of course, of the kings of the earth and their armies, their captains and their mighty men, with all their forces, from the highest officer to the meanest camp follower. There seems to be no exception; all are



destroyed, not by the sword of man, or by a weapon wielded by human power or might, but by an emanation of divine wisdom ;—a manifestation of the word or purpose of God, bearing with it the evidence of the work of propitiation and justification of Him who has trodden alone the wine-press of divine wrath ; and who, even in doing so, has manifested himself to be King of kings and Lord of lords—Jehovah our righteousness ;—the element of perfect infinite sovereignty, and the source of sovereign grace.

‘ And all the fowls were filled with their flesh ;’ or, with their fleshcs.—The term translated *filled* is one applicable to the feeding or foddering of cattle ; it does not necessarily imply *satiety*. These pretended righteousnesses or means of justification, are not to be presumed to be enough, and more than enough to satisfy the legal elements ; on the contrary, the birds here alluded to may be considered still the same ravenous animals as before their feast. Something like this seems to be in contemplation in the prophecy of Ezekiel, of which this battle of Armageddon may be a fulfilment : “ And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord God, Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves and come, gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice, that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood. Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan. And ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. Thus ye shall be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord God,” Ezek. xxxix. 17–20.

The *feathered* fowl, or rather, the winged or flying fowl of Ezekiel, as distinguished from domestic birds, may be presumed to represent the same legal elements as those symbolized by the birds flying in the mid-heaven of the Apocalypse. The only sacrifice, strictly speaking, adequate to the satisfaction of these legal elements, is the great sacrifice offered once for all in Christ Jesus. There may be some question whether the prophet alludes to the evidence of the sufficiency of this great sacrifice ; or to what we may term the preliminary evidence of the insufficiency of all human means of propitiation. It would not be here the place for a discussion of this point ; but there can be no hesitation in ascribing to the flesh and blood alluded to in the prophecy, the same symbolical character as that imputed to the flesh of the armies of the kings of the earth ; the doubt being only whether Ezekiel refers to real or to pretended merits.\*

\* There is a similar use of the figure (flesh) ultimately in view, we apprehend, in the prophet's vision of *dry bones*, Ezek. xxxvii. 1–9. When we look at man in his position under the law, entirely without a merit of his own, the question unavoidably

We are thus brought to a conclusion of the history of the beast and of the false prophet, with their forces ; but some further details of the result of this great contest are to be found in the three first verses of the next chapter ; on which account, the division of the chapters in this place appears to have been injudicious. The allied forces just defeated, were called together by the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. The final destruction of the two last we have learned : they are cast alive into a lake of unquenchable fire. As *alive*, the evil disposition and tendency of these two elements may remain *for ever* in action ; but being cast alive unto a lake or furnace of sulphureous flames, (§ 440,) the fiery trial to which they are exposed must be equally eternal. These errors may be said to remain in existence, but they are so under the continual and perpetual counteracting influence of the trying element destined for ever to manifest their fallacy. The subordinate auxiliary principles of error can hardly be said to remain ; their pretensions are entirely consumed ; and if there be any evidence of their former existence, it is only such as is afforded by the whitened bones of slaughtered armies which have been bleaching for ages on the field, once the scene of bloody contention. We naturally ask, however, what becomes of the third party to this unholy conspiracy, and for a reply to our inquiries, are obliged to wait the developments of another chapter.

#### RETROSPECT.

§ 442. The first part of this chapter should have been set off separately, as describing a choral scene having both a retrospective and a prospective allusion. Retrospective, as regards the destruction of the harlot city or system ; and prospective, as relates to the result of the important conflicts detailed in the subsequent narrative : results presumed to have been contemplated by the chorus, especially in the ascriptions of praise to Jehovah, on account of his *sovereignty* ; for this sovereignty could hardly be said to be manifested while two rebellious armies remained unconquered. Time, however, is not to be taken into consideration ; and accordingly, the events

occurs, Can these dry bones live ? Can one so utterly destitute of merit or righteousness have any hope of eternal life ?

When we contemplate the same being adopted of God, and clothed with the imputed merits of the Son of God, or, which is the same thing, with the imputed righteousness of God himself, we discern the possibility of giving life (eternal life) to that which was entirely dead by nature. The sinner being raised to a new position of life by an operation of sovereign grace, bone comes to its bone, the strength of divine merit is substituted for the weakness of the man ; and the covering of divine imputed perfection substituted for man's unworthiness, in like manner clothes these dry bones with flesh.

hereafter detailed are to be viewed as occurring simultaneously with the destruction of Babylon.

The order of development may require an exhibition of the fallacy of the system of error before its opposite truth can be unfolded. For this reason, perhaps, no hint is given in the Apocalypse of the existence of the *bride* or Lamb's wife, until the final destruction of the harlot has been announced; as if this event were a necessary prelude to the manifestation of the union of the Lamb with his betrothed. It may, indeed, be considered an essential part of the preparation for the appearance of the bride, as at a marriage feast.

Having been brought to this point, (the preparation for the bridal feast,) the thread of the narrative is broken off as far as it pertains to this figure, and we are taken back to that portion of the narration in which an account is given of the counter-preparations made by the beast and kings of the earth to oppose the will of the Most High, in this same manifestation of truth. Here we have the opportunity of knowing more of the character of these hostile powers, and of the nature of their opposition, by the description given of the champion destined to overcome them.

There can be no doubt of the identity of the Lamb of God with the Word of God, but there appears to be a peculiar meaning in the manner in which the same divine power is spoken of under different appellations, according as it is brought to act against different objects. The Lamb is represented to be the antagonist of the ten horns, (legal elements;) while the Word is the opponent of the beast, (the spirit of error,) with his auxiliaries. The chief weapon of the Word, (the interpreter of his will,) is the sharp sword out of his mouth—the sword of the Spirit; the chief agent of the beast is the false prophet, (the two-horned beast like a lamb;)—the difference between these two instruments corresponding with that between a spiritual or true construction of divine revelation, and a carnal or false interpretation of it. The Word of God exhibits his vesture dipped in blood, and appeals to the work of atonement to which his garments bear testimony; the beast may be supposed to appeal to the image of himself, (self-righteousness,) fabricated at the instance of the false prophet. The Word displays his multitude of diadems, and urges the claims of divine sovereignty; the beast relies upon the power of his ten horns, and points to the diadems with which they are crowned, as the argument for their supremacy. The Word is sustained by the white horse, (his own perfect righteousness;) the beast has no support but his vain pretensions, his leopard skin, his bear's feet, and his lion's mouth. The Word, in its manifestation, is attended by an exhibition of the elements of divine perfection; the beast summons to his aid all that earth can furnish of pretended human merit. The Word bears upon his vesture, and upon his thigh, the all-powerful name of King of



kings, *Jehovah of hosts* ; the beast opens his mouth in blasphemy against God, and against his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell therein. The result of the collision is known ; the beast and the false prophet are taken and cast alive into the lake of unquenchable fire.

It is plain that this contest between the Word of God and the beast must be something different from that necessarily taking place between the elements of the law (divine justice) on the one side, and the element of propitiation (the Lamb, or divine mercy) on the other. The last pertains to the work of Christ itself ; the other to the manifestation of that work—the placing of that work in its true light, and destroying the errors opposed to a right understanding of it.

We are still at a loss for a better appellation of the beast than that already given him, (self ;) but we feel no hesitation in affirming, that man, when relying upon his own merit, and when asserting his own sufficiency to secure his eternal salvation, places himself in the position of this blasphemous animal. He is virtually guilty of all that is described in the conduct of the beast. So, that construction of the written word of divine revelation which induces the assumption of this attitude on the part of the creature, (man,) must richly deserve the appellation of a false prophet—a false interpreter of the will of the Most High. The fallacious character of such an interpretation must be the more obvious in proportion as it induces the formation in the mind of man of an imaginary goodness or merit, to which he may impute, as to an efficient cause, even his eternal happiness, and which, consequently, becomes in his mind an object of worship ; the subject of this error, who would start perhaps with abhorrence at the idea of a worship of himself, being actually deluded into a practical worship of his own fancied merit or righteousness.

We can imagine no cure for this delusion, no remedy for the error, but that of a perfect development of the revealed word of God in its true spiritual sense, and the constant, perpetual, never-ending application of it ; such a test alone being capable of purifying every element of doctrine submitted to its action, like a refiner's fire, and like the fire which is to burn as an oven, (furnace.) To a test of this character, we have seen the element represented by the beast finally subjected ; and in this result we may be said to behold the fulfilment of the prediction of the fate attending the *eighth king*, (Rev. xvii. 11 :) “ And the beast that was and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.” The beast taken in this conflict with the Word, must be the same beast as that spoken of in the seventeenth chapter of the book ; and the being cast alive into the lake burning with fire and brimstone, must certainly be equivalent to *going into perdition*.

The whole of this illustration is probably applicable to some general

development of truth, and consequent general destruction of false doctrine, taking place in the Christian world at a certain period yet to come ; but whether this be so or not, every Christian disciple—and the revelation is addressed particularly to such—in examining his own views, and calling to mind his own doctrinal experience, as he has advanced in the knowledge of the gospel, must perceive himself to have within his own mind a kingdom like that of the beast ; a certain principle or disposition within his heart ever ready to claim the merit of his own salvation—to urge his dependence upon his own strength or works ; and in doing so to appeal to the continued requisitions of the law.

Every such disciple must perceive, too, that while there is in man a natural disposition to vainglory and self-dependence, a certain misconstruction of the language of the sacred Scripture may strengthen him in this delusion ; in which respect he may be said also to be influenced by the false prophet within him. How far this influence has extended every one may judge by comparing the state of his own mind in matters of faith with the effect said to be produced by the intervention of the ten-horned beast. Does he regard himself as, in effect, the source to which he is to be indebted for his own eternal happiness ? Does he create in his own mind an image of his own goodness, or holiness, or righteousness ? Does he look to this as to the efficient cause of his future well-being ? Are the actions of his life, or the sentiments of his heart characterized by the *mark* of selfishness ? What is the chief motive of his conduct ? Is it his own glory that he has in view, or the glory of his God ? Is he actuated by a regard for his own interest in his religious conduct, or is gratitude (love) to God in return for his great salvation the moving principle of his actions ? According to the result of this examination he may ascertain whether the kingdom of the beast, or the kingdom of God, be within him—whether his views are influenced by the false prophet, or by the *sharp sword* proceeding from the mouth of divine wisdom.

## CHAPTER XX.

SATAN CONFINED.—THE FIRST JUDGMENT.—THE FIRST  
RESURRECTION.—THE THOUSAND YEARS.—SATAN  
RELEASED.—THE LAST CONFLICT.—THE LAST JUDG-  
MENT.—THE BOOK OF LIFE.—THE LAKE OF FIRE.

Vs. 1-3. And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

Καὶ εἶδον ἄγγελον καταβαῖνοντα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ἔχοντα τὴν κλεῖν τῆς ἀβύσσου καὶ ἄλυσιν μεγάλην ἐπὶ τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ. Καὶ ἐκράτησε τὸν δράκοντα, τὸν ὄφιν τὸν ἀρχαῖον, ὃς ἐστὶ διάβολος καὶ σατανᾶς, καὶ ἔδραμεν αὐτὸν χίλια ἔτη, καὶ ἔβαλεν αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν ἀβύσσον, καὶ ἔκλεισε καὶ ἐσφράγισεν ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ, ἵνα μὴ πλανήσῃ ἐτι τὰ ἔθνη. Ἄχρι τελεσθῇ τὰ χίλια ἔτη· καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα δεῖ αὐτὸν λυθῆναι μικρὸν χρόνον.

§ 443. ‘AND I saw,’ &c.—Setting aside the division of chapters, we are here to imagine the apostle witnessing the termination of the great battle, in which the KING OF KINGS is so signally victorious; the enemies of the WORD, (the beast and false prophet, with all their forces,) having been entirely overthrown. There is no pause in the narrative. The succession of events is as rapid as thought, or rather, the incidents themselves are contemporaneous; one event being involved in or growing out of another. The destruction of the mercenary or mixed system, the overthrow of the kingdom of self, the exhibition of the fallacies of scriptural misconstruction, all contribute to manifest the fate attending the *accuser*, as it is now about to be described.

The scene is unchanged—heaven is still opened—the smoking ruins of Babylon, and the devastation of the battle-field are still in view; while a further development of truth (another angel) exhibits another result of the recent contest.

‘Having the key of the bottomless pit.’—As the keys of the kingdom of heaven are the means of unlocking or developing the mysteries of that kingdom, (§ 37,) so the key of the bottomless pit, as before suggested, (§ 207,) are the means of developing or opening the mystery of the abyss. On a former occasion, Rev. ix. 1, this key was used for the purpose of exhibiting the destructive principles emanating from the system represented



by the *pit* ; now, a like opening or development takes place to show the further important truth, that when the mixed economy is destroyed, and the reign of self has ceased, and the false construction of revelation is set aside, the power of Satan must be manifestly confined to the position created by this baseless system. The triumph of the Word of God over the powers of the earth, as just now represented, may itself afford the *key*, figuratively spoken of as that of an angel or divine messenger.

‘ And a great chain in his hand.’—As the angel represents a revelation or messenger, we suppose this *great chain* to be the figure of a powerful concatenation of gospel truths—a chain of scriptural arguments—important elements of doctrine indissolubly connected ; showing in what manner the power of the accuser is bound, or restricted in the nature of the case, by the elements of divine sovereignty peculiar to the economy of grace. As when the apostle Paul sets forth his position, that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, (Rom. viii. 1,) by a chain of deductions from the helpless, hopeless state of man by nature, (as a sinner under the law,) to the fulfilment of that law by Christ himself, in behalf of those justified *in him*. In like manner, the angel’s chain may show it to be only those *out of Christ*, and consequently in the bottomless pit, who are subject to the power of the accuser.

As in the science of architecture, the chain is said to have been the origin of the arch, the arrangement of principles constituting the plan of redemption, elsewhere represented as an arch, of which *grace* is the top or keystone, (Zech. iv. 7,) may be here spoken of as a chain ;—the structure supporting the way of salvation, and exhibiting the triumph of the Redeemer, being equally mighty in restraining or binding the power of legal accusation.

§ 441. ‘ And he laid hold on the dragon,’ &c.—The variety of appellations given to this one object, cannot be without meaning. They are all of them, no doubt, intended to recall ideas respectively associated with each, besides identifying the personage here spoken of with that of which so much was related in the twelfth chapter of the book :—the great *fiery-red* dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems upon his heads, whose tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven ; who stood ready to devour the man-child ;—the antagonist of Michael and his angels, the persecutor of the woman and of her offspring, (§ 269–291 ; ) the same dragon that gave his power, and throne, and great authority to the beast, after having been driven from heaven to earth, (§ 297 ; )—one of the parties to the *league*, by which the kings of the earth were summoned to the battle of Armageddon, and the only one of those parties not yet disposed of ; not having himself appeared personally in the field, but aiming rather to compass his ends through the beast and false prophet.

As *the old serpent*, we are again reminded by this dragon of the delusive spirit bringing our first parents into the position of condemnation, under the pretext of making them as gods—a delusion to which Paul adverts in a passage of his Epistles, in which he aims particularly at cautioning those whom he addresses against *glorying* otherwise than in the Lord: “But I fear,” he says, “lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve, through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ;” the tendency of this arch-deceiver’s efforts from the beginning being that of prompting man to go about to establish his own righteousness, by fulfilling the law for himself, that he may have “wherewith to glory.”

The appellation *the devil* (the accuser) we have perhaps already sufficiently enlarged upon, (§ 282;) but it is important for us to bear in mind that this agent of the law, although a false accuser of the elements of the economy of grace, (the brethren,) is not a *false* accuser of man, in charging him with *sin*. Here the accusations of the devil are but too well founded; and it is for this reason that his power is to be dreaded by the disciple, so long as the latter feels himself *out of Christ*. Neither are we to look upon the devil merely as a *tempter*, leading man to the commission of moral evil, for “every man is tempted,” it is said, (Jas. i. 14,) “when he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed;” a trial, as experience teaches us, continuing through life. We have no occasion to go out of ourselves to find a tempter. The scriptural view of the functions of the devil (διάβολος) we apprehend to consist especially in bringing the sinner to condemnation after the temptation has been yielded to.

The meaning of the Hebrew appellation *Satan*, or, as it might be rendered, *the Satan*, (ὁ σατανᾶς,) confirms our view of this individual’s character. The term is not a proper name, as we are apt to suppose it; it is a common noun, a *title*, and should be used with the article. It is applied in the Old Testament to human as well as to superhuman beings; its signification, *an adversary*, or *the adversary*, may be spoken of an enemy in the field, or of an adversary in a court of justice—an enemy in a spiritual or in a natural sense: as Solomon had political adversaries, to whom this appellation is applied, (1 Kings xi. 14, 23, 25,) while David employs the term to designate his spiritual enemies—the adversaries of his *soul*—the powers opposed to his justification in the sight of God. *Trommius* gives several interpretations, both of the noun and verb, in his Heb. and Chald. Index, but the idea of *temptation* cannot be associated with either of them. The verb שָׁטָן whence the noun שָׁטָן (*Satan*) is derived, signifies primarily to *resist*, (oppose;) employed judicially, it applies to the action of counsel for the prosecution, as, amongst other meanings, that of *criminator* (to accuse) is given to it by the author above quoted. “Blessed,” (says David,) “is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.” The

coming of this blessedness, we suppose to be just the object of Satan's resistance. We should, accordingly, render the expression under consideration here in English as follows: "And he laid hold of the dragon, the old serpent, which is *the accuser and the adversary*."

§ 445. 'And bound him a thousand years.'—We are now, it is to be recollected, contemplating the *manifestation* of the work of redemption, not the work itself. The present binding of Satan is a result of the conflict between the powers (errors) of the earth and the revealed Word of God, as distinguished from the contest between the Lamb and the dragon, (the accuser.) This last terminated once for all, when Christ once offered himself to bear the sins of many, (Heb. ix. 28.) Here there can be no change; the counsels of God are immutable. The blood of the Lamb slain *from the foundation of the world* has always been, and must always be triumphant. In respect to the exhibition of this truth, however, or to its influence upon any earthly scheme of doctrine, there may be said to be times when the Word of God prevails; and other seasons when error, such as is represented by the beast, may appear to predominate.

It would not be difficult to imagine a period of a thousand years of such a manifestation of truth, as to show, in sight of all mankind, the power of the adversary (Satan) to be necessarily confined to a system figuratively spoken of as a bottomless pit. But when all the other parts of a passage in this book are to be taken in a spiritual or figurative sense, we see no reason for making the expression *a thousand years* an exception to the general rule. There is no reason why the term thousand, or that of years, should not be as figurative as the terms *chain, key, pit*, &c. In addition to this, we are to take into consideration the declaration of the mighty angel, (Rev. x. 7:) "There shall be time no longer;" and we have as good reason for applying this declaration to the term of one thousand years here, as we have had for applying it to the twelve hundred and sixty days. We have no warrant for maintaining the distinction, that the *years* are literal, but the *days* are figurative. So, on the other hand, if we were to consider the twelve hundred and sixty days, or forty-two months, as days of years, and months of thirty years each, by the same rule we should consider the period now under consideration as one of three hundred and sixty thousand years, instead of one thousand.

This is the only passage in the Apocalypse in which the term year or years occurs, except Rev. ix. 15, where we have assigned reasons for supposing the expression, hour, day, month, and year, to signify a time when, and not a period of duration. We are told, Ps. xc. 4, that a thousand years in the sight of God are but as yesterday; and 2 Peter iii. 8, that *one day* is with the Lord as a *thousand years*, and a *thousand years* as *one day*. We have some warrant, therefore, for supposing a thousand years, in



mystic language, to be an interchangeable term for a day ; that is, time in a literal sense is not to be taken into consideration. The period here mentioned, is to be considered as the figure of a state of things resulting from a certain manifestation of truth ; a stage in the progress of revelation, beyond which there is yet some further development to be made : as when we speak of the *day of the Lord*, we associate with this term the idea of a state of things of an indefinite duration, or a change in a state of things, and not merely the short period of twenty-four hours. This construction appears the more probable, as this period of a thousand years, whatever it may be, is supposed to have elapsed before the conclusion of the present chapter ; and the events taking place subsequent to its termination are related in the past tense, (vs. 9 and 10,) as if they were supposed to occur almost contemporaneously with those related in the first part of the chapter.

The revelation showing Satan (the legal accuser) to be bound, exhibits a state of things, in which the law is no longer in operation, in a penal sense ; an arrangement of principles, placing the disciple in a position in which there is no room for his *labouring* to effect his own justification by works of the law. This position is one of *rest*—a *rest* from servile labour ; not a state of inactivity, but an entire suspension of action from *mercenary motives*. Such a state resulting from the disciple's position in Christ, we suppose to be represented, as already intimated, (§ 338,) by the Levitical Sabbath. A position, in which the believer is not only relieved from *labour*, but in which it is even unlawful for him to *labour*, in the servile sense of the term : that is, a position in which it would be entirely inconsistent for him to act from a servile, mercenary, or selfish motive. As this position of *rest* has been typically represented from the beginning by the seventh day of the week, so it appears to correspond with what is commonly called the *millennium*—the seventh day of a thousand years in the history of the world ;—the period supposed to be alluded to by the thousand years specified in this passage.\*

§ 446. ‘And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up ;’ or, locked him up.—The *key* is still the instrument of confinement, as the word translated *shut* implies ; not that the concealing of a mystery is part of the use of the key, but that this instrument, by opening the mystery, exhibits the condition of the individual confined. The angel (message or revelation)

\* Our world, according to the common chronology, has been created nearly six thousand years, (3318.) Another millennial period, after the completion of the current sixth, would correspond with the seventh day of the week. We do not say that the occurrence of a thousand years of literal peace and quietness on this earth is necessarily to be expected ; but we say, If such a season should occur, it would be like the Sabbath, a typical representation of that more important state of *rest* and *peace* which results from the disciple's position *in Christ*, and from the binding of Satan, in our spiritual sense of the term.

with his chain and key, manifests the restriction of the power of the accuser to a certain position; showing it to be only by those, who are in the bottomless pit with the adversary, that his accusations are to be dreaded.

‘And set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till,’ &c.—The design of sealing places of confinement (Dan. vi. 17) was, no doubt, to prevent their being opened illegally; for, although a door may be locked by one key, it may be opened by another (a false key.) In such case, *if sealed*, the fraud would be discovered. This seems to have been a contrivance of early invention, being probably more necessary when the art of the locksmith was less perfected than it is at present. Here the *seal* appears intended to show the true character of the adversary. His power is not only manifestly confined to a certain position, but a seal is *set over* him in this position, that his influence may not be exercised under false pretences: the sealing, as we apprehend, being especially with reference to the prevention of this influence.

The term *nations* we take here, as elsewhere in the Apocalypse, to represent elements of doctrine—powers of the earthly system—subject to perversion, from a misuse of the accusatory character of the law; the word translated here *deceive*, and elsewhere *seduce*, signifying a turning from the right way, (*πλανάω*, a *recto itinere abduco*—*in errorem impello*, Suiceri. Lex.) Satan is spoken of as deceiving the whole world, Rev. xii. 9, where he is said also to be cast out into the earth. Subsequently to this, those that dwell on the earth are said to be deceived (led astray) by the false prophet, (Rev. xiii. 14; xix. 20;) and again, to have been seduced (led astray) by the sorceries of Babylon, (Rev. xviii. 23.) We presume these two last deceivers to be agents of Satan, the adversary acting upon the earth—deluding, deceiving—through their instrumentality. As their influence is now at an end, it is necessary only to arrest that of the accuser himself, acting in his own person, but when it suits his purposes transforming himself into an “angel of light”—in appearance a messenger of righteousness. In this character, if not chained, locked up, and sealed, he might now appear—using the law unlawfully, manifesting great zeal for its fulfilment, but in reality so misrepresenting the divine purposes of grace, as to undermine the faith of the disciple, and to deprive the Saviour of his glory. To prevent this a *seal* is set over him, showing his true character and his true position. So long as these are manifested, the opposite position of *rest in Christ* is also manifested, and a millennium, in a spiritual sense, exists in the doctrinal systems of those who enjoy this view of the privileges and blessings of the kingdom of Christ; such, for example, as are depicted in the seventy-second Psalm, and in the eleventh chapter of Isaiah. This stage in the manifestation of gospel truth, we suppose to be figuratively here spoken of as a *thousand years*.

‘And after that he must be loosed for a little season.’—After the expiration, the ending of the thousand years, the adversary is to be released from his confinement for a *little time*. That is, time figuratively speaking—duration of time in a literal sense not being the subject of consideration, whether the space spoken of be long or short; the same rule of construction applying to “a little time” as to a thousand years, or to twelve hundred and sixty days. The seventh king was to “continue a short space,” (Rev. xvii. 10,) and there may be some correspondence between these two *short reigns*—different figures, perhaps, symbolizing the same truth. We may understand the nature of this liberation better when we come to examine the effect of it, as set forth in the great battle detailed in a subsequent part of this chapter, (vs. 7–10.) We notice here only that this confinement to the bottomless pit is represented to be something of a temporary character—something distinct from a final destruction, or a going into perdition; the pit representing a system apparently identic with *hades*, which itself is a subject of destruction, (v. 14.) Satan is first cast from heaven to earth; secondly, from earth into the pit; and finally, (thirdly,) into the lake of fire.

Vs. 4, 5. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and (I saw) the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received (his) mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This (is) the first resurrection.

Καὶ εἶδον θρόνους· καὶ ἐκάθισαν ἐπ' αὐτοὺς, καὶ κρίμα ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς· καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν πεπλεκισμένων διὰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ καὶ διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ οἵτινες οὐ προσεκύνησαν τὸ θηρίον οὐδὲ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἔλαβον τὸ χάραγμα ἐπὶ τὸ μέτωπον καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν χεῖρα αὐτῶν, καὶ ἔζησαν καὶ ἐβασίλευσαν μετὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ τὰ χίλια ἔτη. Οἱ δὲ λοιποὶ τῶν νεκρῶν οὐκ ἔζησαν ἄχρι τελεσθῆ τὰ χίλια ἔτη· αὕτη ἡ ἀνάστασις ἡ πρώτη.

§ 447. ‘And I saw thrones,’ &c.; or, I saw *seats*, &c., that is, certain tribunals of judgment.—We have just had an account of a great battle; we have had the particulars of the loss suffered by the vanquished; their killed, and the prisoners taken; the manner in which these prisoners were treated; and, finally, the manner in which the instigator of the war is bound hand and foot and cast into prison. Throughout this narration, the process common in ancient times in the conduct of battles of extraordinary importance is supposed to be adopted. As a marriage feast is one mode of illustrating certain mysterious truths, a battle is another means of representing other mysteries. In both cases the customs of the times are to be taken into consideration.

Pursuing the analogy, the account being completed of the punishment to which the defeated rebels and their leaders have been subjected, we come next to a relation of the honours and rewards allotted to the victors. For



the distribution of these rewards we may expect to see something like a tribunal of judgment. The figure, however, is Asiatic, rather than Greek or Roman. With republics, or with aristocracies, and even with mixed monarchies, the seat of government is at home. A Grecian general would have submitted an account of his proceedings to an assembly of the people, and the meed of praise or blame would have depended upon the public voice. A Roman consul, or dictator, and even a Roman emperor, would have depended upon the action of a senate for a decree of triumph. But with the pure monarchies of the east, wherever the sovereign is to be found, there is also the seat of government. If a warlike sovereign takes the field himself, the tribunal of supreme judgment, as well as the legislative and executive power, is supposed to follow the commander-in-chief even on the battle ground.

In keeping with this view of Asiatic customs, we have no occasion to imagine a pause in the succession of the scenes here presented. It is as if immediately after a great military contest, in which the sovereign had commanded in person, seats of judgment were erected on the field bearing evidences of the recent triumph, for the allotment of rewards to those who had distinguished themselves, by judges appointed for the purpose.

The apostle does not say how many seats or thrones he saw—perhaps this is not material; whatever the number, we suppose these tribunals to represent something of the same character as that ascribed to the thrones of the twenty-four elders, (§ 121.) The law and the testimony are here, as elsewhere, the criterion of judgment: the *testimony* itself comprehending the whole evidence of divine revelation, whatever is judged must be judged by this standard; corresponding with the language of the prophet, Is. viii. 20, already quoted.

§ 448. ‘And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded,’ &c.—The word translated *beheaded* is from the verb *πέλεκίζω*, to strike with an axe. The kind of axe with which the blow is struck, must be gathered from the circumstances of the case. The noun *πέλεκυς* may signify a common axe, a battle-axe, or the axes borne by the lictors amongst the Romans before their consuls, (Donnegan.) The term occurs nowhere else in the New Testament; in the Septuagint it is applied to the instruments of stone-cutters and carpenters, or their uses. The custom of bearing axes by the lictors, probably arose from the previous very general use of the pole-axe in the field of battle. Taking into consideration the peculiarity that the assembly now described is supposed to be called together immediately after a great military conflict, we think that the allusion here is to the use of the *battle-axe*. Our translators have employed the term *beheaded* apparently from associating with the Greek word the idea of the use of the axe by order of the civil magistrate only.

If it had been said, I saw the souls of them that were slain, or of them that were killed by the *sword*, the reference would have carried us back to the followers of the beast slain by the sword out of the mouth of the Word of God. To avoid this misconception, the figure of a different weapon is employed for designating the wounded or killed on the side of the King of kings. The sword is peculiarly the weapon of the Holy Spirit. The pole-axe is the human instrument of warfare; the more appropriately so in this case, from having been first employed as an instrument of labour in the works of men, afterwards as a military equipment, and finally as a symbol of the power of the magistrate in carrying into effect the sentence of the law. In witnessing the late battle, the apostle saw the remnant of the beast-party (all except the two chiefs) slain by the *sword*. He now sees the souls of those on the other side that were slain by the axe, (*bipennis, securis bellica*.)\*

The term soul or souls is very frequently employed in Scripture, by way of periphrasis, for the *being* itself. Perhaps it would be sufficient to consider it so intended here,—“I saw *those* that were slain or killed. That is, I saw them *restored to life*—a restoration implied in the subsequent declaration, that this is the first resurrection; although the having been struck with an axe does not necessarily imply death. These souls might be taken as combatants on the side of truth, severely wounded in the cause, but not killed. Where the term soul is employed in contradistinction to that of *body*, we suppose it expresses the immortal part of the being; where it is employed in contradistinction to the term *spirit*, we take it to apply to something in a natural or physical sense, as distinguished from the same thing in a spiritual sense. There is nothing here, however, indicating either of these contrasts. If we consider the killing or beheading of these beings equivalent to a separation of the natural from the spiritual sense, their resurrection would be a reunion of these two senses; but perhaps such a supposition at present would be premature.

‘For the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God.’—From this designation of the cause, on account of which these souls had suffered, we pre-

\* We have the authority of a Roman poet for considering the battle-axe, so common a weapon in ancient warfare, (that is, soon after the siege of Troy,) as to have been wielded even by female combatants.

At medias inter cædes exultat Amazon,  
Unum exerta latus pugnæ, pharetrata Camilla,  
Et nunc lenta manu spargens hostilia denset,  
Nunc validam dextrâ rapit indefessa bipennem.

\* \* \* \* \*

At circum lectæ comites. Larinaque virgo,  
Tullaque, et æratam quatiens Tarpeia securim,  
Italides:

sume them to be the *witnesses* whose souls were seen under the altar. Not that this beheading, as it is called, is a second martyrdom, but that the two representations point to the same truth. The first series of developments terminated with the conclusion of the sixth chapter, immediately after the description of the coming of the great day of wrath. The revelation of the state of the souls under the altar formed part of this series. They were then told that they should *rest* for a season, and white robes were given them. This position of rest, and enjoyment of white clothing, described in the sixth chapter, corresponds, we apprehend, with the reigning with Christ a thousand years, in the twentieth chapter. It might be said, indeed, that these souls of the *beheaded* are probably the *brethren* of those whose bodies were under the altar, and that the period alluded to, Rev. vi. 11, has now approached. We do not suppose these brethren to be literally such, or even collateral evidences or witnesses: we are rather inclined to consider them corresponding illustrations; the witnesses under the altar, and the witnesses killed or wounded in the battle with the beast, being the same elements of revelation, bearing testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus.

§ 449. ‘Which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image,’ &c.—These particulars may be necessary to contrast more pointedly the condition of the individuals here spoken of, with that of the opposite class elsewhere described; the comparison serving to indicate the kind of enjoyment granted to these sufferers in the cause of truth. “They have no *rest*, day nor night,” it is said, (Rev. xiv. 11,) “who worship the beast, and his image,” &c.; the smoke of their torture ascending up for ever. On the other hand, those that do not worship the beast, &c., live and reign with Christ a thousand years; consequently, as we conceive, this millennial state is the opposite of the state of *no rest*, and of continual torture, or trial as by a refiner’s fire. Corresponding with the idea before suggested, that this figure of a thousand years is intended to express a position, not a period of time in the ordinary sense.

‘And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.’—The accuser is bound and confined to the pit for a thousand years, and the elements of truth live and reign with Christ for a thousand years. This term of years thus, as in the case of the twelve hundred and sixty days, &c., serves the purpose of a standard of equivalents, (§ 240 :) a scale of comparison, indicating the manifestation of the restriction of the power of the accuser to the bottomless pit position to be equal to a reigning with Christ, on the part of the elements of truth. To be secure from the power of the accuser, is to be in a position of *rest* as regards the works and requisitions of the law. Such is the position of those spoken of as not having worshipped the beast, because their position is the opposite of those which have worshipped him.



‘But the rest [remainder] of the dead lived not.’—The words rendered *the rest* here, are the same as those translated the *remnant* in the preceding chapter—οἱ λοιποὶ, the remaining ones. These remaining ones cannot be those on the side of the Word, which had not suffered death; because these could not be said to be of the number of the dead. The only *remaining* ones to which this reference can be made, are the dead slain by the sword of the Word, whose flesh was given to the birds. These, although entirely destroyed by the first death, are capable of being again, by divine power, restored to life. They do not share in the first resurrection; but that there is another resurrection, in which they will share, is implied. They have all partaken, we may presume, of the worship of the beast or of his image, or they have received his mark in their foreheads, or in their hands; for which reason they cannot live and reign with Christ, or participate in the position designated by this thousand years’ reign. They have a resuscitation to undergo, but it is something irrespective of this millennial position; and is, therefore, described as not taking place till after the termination of the thousand years. In effect, where Christ reigns these elements of subserviency to the beast can find no place. So, too, in the nature of the case, they can find no place in the order of things, or in the arrangement of principles, constituting the first resurrection or position of *rest*.

V. 6. Blessed and holy (is) he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Μακάριος καὶ ἅγιος ὁ ἔχων μέρος ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει τῇ πρώτῃ· ἐπὶ τούτων ὁ δευτέρως θάνατος οὐκ ἔχει ἐξουσίαν, ἀλλ’ ἔσονται ἱερεῖς τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ βασιλεύσουσι μετ’ αὐτοῦ χίλια ἔτη.

§ 450. ‘Blessed and holy,’ &c.—Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, it is said, Rev. xiv. 13; and the reason assigned for this blessedness is, that those thus dead *rest* from their labours, (§ 338;) the same blessed position of rest being spoken of in one part of the Apocalypse as being dead in Christ, which in another part is termed a first resurrection. The disciple in Christ is accounted dead to the law, as if in Christ he had suffered the penalty of the law, and could therefore be no more obnoxious to its requisitions; at the same time, in Christ he is also accounted justified, freed from the power of the law, and thus raised to a new position of life—a first resurrection. So it is said, (Rev. xvi. 15,) Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments;—he that is always clothed with the garments of salvation—the covering of his Saviour’s merits, the robe of his Redeemer’s righteousness. He, too, in this state of readiness, (§ 367,) is in a position corresponding with that of the first resurrection, as well as with that of *rest*.

As with the disciple, so with the elements of the economy of grace personified as disciples, (§ 427.) Blessed are those called to the marriage-

feast ; those participating in the manifestation of the mystery of salvation by grace. We suppose the marriage-feast to be an equivalent of the first resurrection ; the blessedness of the same elements being represented by different figures. Those called to the marriage-feast, are evidently such as have not worshipped the beast or his image, or received his mark ; and, consequently, are such as live and reign with Christ, and participate in his rest. We apply this blessedness here to elements of doctrine personified as disciples, and not to disciples themselves directly, because the whole representation is connected with the conflict just decided between the Word and the beast ; a conflict of manifestation, resulting in an exhibition of the triumph of elements of truth over those of falsehood.\*

‘ On such the second death hath no power.’—It was said in the epistle to the angel of the church in Smyrna, (Rev. ii. 11,) “ He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the *second death*.” In remarking upon that expression, we have given our reasons for considering this *second death* a perpetual trial, to which systems and elements of systems are to be subjected, (§ 57.) We have seen no reason since to alter our views, and the construction then adopted applies here with equal facility. The elements enjoying the benefits of the first resurrection, are those which have borne witness to the truth as it is in Jesus, and which, in the great contest for truth, have been the advocates on the side of the Word of God : fighting, as it were, in the ranks of the Word, they have overcome the beast and the false prophet. They have been killed by the axe, indeed, but they now enjoy a resurrection from that death ; and over them, as promised to *him that overcometh*, the second death hath no power, or they cannot be *hurt* by it, in the sense before attributed to this term, (§ 174.)

‘ But they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign,’ &c.—It was the peculiar office of priests to offer sacrifices ; both thank-offerings (sacrifices of gratitude and praise) and propitiatory offerings. Christ having once offered himself as a sacrifice for sin, this last portion of the priest’s service must be ended ; and we may presume it especially to be dispensed with in the position represented by the *first resurrection* ; but the offerings of thanksgiving still remain to be made, and this forever. The elements of the economy of grace tending to exhibit the cause of gratitude and praise, are accordingly personified as those destined to be priests of God and of Christ. They are elements of truth, setting forth such views of God and of Christ as tend to make him the object of gratitude and praise ; they are thus, figuratively, priests or sacrificators in this position of rest.

\* We have not enlarged upon the term *holy* (ἅγιος) here, because applying it to principles or elements of truth *set apart* ; our views of its use in this place must be sufficiently obvious, from the remarks elsewhere made, (§§ 88, 262.)

These elements of truth also predominate in the arrangement of principles exhibiting the position of rest in Christ, for which reason they are said to reign with him a thousand years ; the scale or standard of *parallelism* being here again employed, showing that to be priests, and to reign in the sense alluded to, is equivalent to enjoying the second resurrection ; that is, equivalent to entering into the composition of that arrangement or economy which affords the position of *rest* in Christ, the opposite of the condition of the worshippers of the beast, (principles sustaining the dominion of the beast.)

#### SATAN RELEASED.

Vs. 7, 8. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison. And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle : the number of whom (is) as the sand of the sea.

Καὶ ὅταν τελεσθῇ τὰ χίλια ἔτη, λυθή-  
σεται ὁ σατανᾶς ἐκ τῆς φυλακῆς αὐτοῦ,  
καὶ ἐξελεύσεται πλανῆσαι τὰ ἔθνη τὰ ἐν  
ταῖς τέσσαρσι γωνίαις τῆς γῆς, τὸν Γὼγ καὶ  
τὸν Μαγὼγ, συναγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς εἰς πόλε-  
μον, ὃν ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτῶν ὡς ἡ ἄμμος τῆς  
θαλάσσης.

§ 451. ‘And when,’ &c.—Here the chapter might have been very properly divided, something like a new series of illustrations being commenced. The great battle of Armageddon has been fought ; the fate of the enemy has been recounted, and the reward allotted to the faithful adherents of the conqueror has been set forth, including even a designation of the term or period for the enjoyment of this reward. This term is now supposed to be expired ; Satan is released for “a little season,” and the reign with Christ, or position of rest, ceases for a corresponding season. The expressions in these two verses, it is true, imply something to come, but the narrative gradually merges itself into a relation of something having already taken place ; a versatility of representation not inconsistent with the account of a dream or vision ; but, perhaps, hardly otherwise allowable. Admitted as it is here, the peculiarity serves to remind us that a literal construction in any respect is to be carefully avoided.

‘Satan shall be loosed out of his prison ;’ released from custody or confinement.—The accuser was not only cast into the bottomless pit, as into a prison, he was also bound with a great chain. He is *now loosed*, unbound, no longer confined in the pit, or by the great chain. The concatenation of doctrinal truths, as we have supposed it to be, (§ 443,) is for a time lost sight of, and the adversary appears in full power ; or, as we may say, whenever the chain of evangelical truths, showing the confinement of Satan to the abyss system, is lost sight of, then the accuser appears to reassume his legal power, and the position of rest is no longer discernible ; the *thousand*



years serving to point out the *parallelism* (§ 240) in this verse as before, time being otherwise out of consideration.

‘And shall go out to deceive the nations,’ &c.;—or, rather, to lead them astray, to pervert the doctrinal powers figuratively spoken of as the nations.

‘In the four corners of the earth;’—that is, on all the earth, (§ 172,) the earth being taken for a square flat surface. The recesses in each of the angles of a square being those parts at the greatest distance from the centre, to say that even these angles are reached, is a strong expression for reaching every portion of the square. Satan is thus represented as deluding the nations in every portion of the earth.

On the former occasion, Rev. xvi. 14, the summons to battle was directed to the *kings* of the earth and of the whole world; and those under the command of the beast with the false prophet were supposed to gather together their respective forces. There was a great variety in the grades or ranks of these forces, from their captains and mighty men down even to the slaves of the common soldiers. Still, these were only the military portion of the nations; every nation furnishing its quota of troops. Now, there is a general rally of the nations themselves—a *levy en masse* is to be imagined throughout the world;—corresponding with a universal falling away from the truth, or general perversion of all elements of religious doctrine; and this, too, not under the lead of the spirit of error, or under the influence of the false prophet, or of a misconstruction of divine revelation, but influenced and led on solely by the spirit of accusation—the legal adversary. The blasphemous pretensions of self (the beast) have been overcome—the fallacies of misinterpretation or of literal interpretation have been exposed; but the whole earthly scheme of doctrine is now led astray by the spirit of fear—the fear of legal accusation, the opposite of that *love* which casteth out fear.

§ 452. ‘Gog and Magog, to gather,’ &c.—These names appear to be put as an equivalent for the nations in the four quarters of the earth. The *Gog* mentioned in the Old Testament is said to have been the king of a people called *Magog*, inhabiting regions far remote from Palestine. Some suppose, by this name *Magog*, the ancients to have intended to denote northern nations generally, (Rob. Lex. 132;) and that the term is used in a similar sense in this passage. If this supposition be well founded, the use of these names here may be merely as an *intensive*, indicating the nations in question to be gathered from the utmost ends of the earth; the force now assembling being figuratively all that the earth can possibly furnish: all the elements of the earthly system, without exception, are perverted to establish the power of legal accusation, or of the legal adversary.

The names employed in the sacred writings, however, are not, we think,

selected by the spirit of inspiration without reference to their meaning, although it may be difficult for us at present to ascertain precisely what this meaning is. So, too, it seems probable, that names occurring in the Old Testament are not cited in the New without the design of bringing about the collation of the passages bearing this index, and thus affording some additional illustration. The word Gog is said to signify a *cover*, or that which covers—*tectum vel solarium* ; and Magog, covering—*tegens, tegulans*, (Cruden, Leusden, and others.)\* This meaning would apply to a multitude of people, covering, as it were, the face of the earth ; or it would apply to the multitude of pretensions to self-righteousness, professing to furnish garments or coverings of salvation, by man's fulfilment of the law. This latter sense seems to us to be that in contemplation in the passage here under consideration.

Corresponding with this construction, we put a like interpretation upon the language of the prophet, alluding apparently to the same manifestation of a general perversion of doctrinal principles, operating against that economy of grace, which constitutes the Christian's asylum, or dwelling of *rest*, and of safety. "Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord God, In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it ? And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses ; a great company, and a mighty army. And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel as a cloud to cover the land ; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes," Ezek. xxxviii. 14-16.

The *dwelling safely* of the prophet, we suppose to be equivalent to what we denominate the millennial rest of the Apocalypse ; as it is said in a preceding verse of the same prediction : "And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwall'd villages ; I will go to them that are at *rest*, that *dwell safely* ; all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates," Ezek. xxxviii. 11 ; as if Gog had heard of the gracious prediction, Zech. ii. 4, 5, and had determined to test the power of the promised protection : "Jerusalem shall be as towns without walls . . . . for I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her." As the garment of salvation is to the disciple, so this wall of salvation is to the city—both figures representing the same protection of imputed righteousness. Against this protection, as if to show its insufficiency, the powers of the earthly system (Gog and Magog) are now gathered together, under the conduct of the accuser. Their number is

\* גִּג (Radix ipsa) δῶμα, *Tectum*. Tromm. Index Heb. et Chald.

hyperbolically represented “as the sand of the sea;” and this, perhaps, because these elements are equally unstable, incapable of affording a foundation upon which to build a system of redemption. It is a little remarkable that these hostile powers should be described, as to multitude, by the same figure of speech as that applied to the promised multitude of the seed of Abraham, David, &c. Perhaps this may be designed to direct our attention to the fact, that the multitude of elements is the same, although in this latter representation they are in a perverted state; corresponding with the wayward character of the descendants of the patriarch.

Vs. 9, 10. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet (are), and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Καὶ ἀνέβησαν ἐπὶ τὸ πλάτος τῆς γῆς, καὶ ἐκύκλωσαν τὴν παρεμβολὴν τῶν ἁγίων καὶ τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγαπημένην· καὶ κατέβη πῦρ ἐκ τοῦ θείου, ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ κατέφαγεν αὐτούς· καὶ ὁ διάβολος ὁ πλανῶν αὐτοὺς ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός καὶ θείου, ὅπου καὶ τὸ θηρίον καὶ ὁ ψευδοπροφήτης, καὶ βασανισθήσονται ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

§ 453. ‘And they went up on the breadth of the earth;’ or, upon the whole surface of the earth: the whole platform of earthly views of religious doctrine, as a multitude coming from the four corners of a square, however extensive, and spreading from side to side must necessarily cover the whole area.

‘And compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city.’—The camp of the saints, and the beloved city, may be nearly convertible symbolic terms—different figures of the same provision of safety: or the entrenchments of the camp may represent the same divine protection as the promised *wall* just now alluded to. So, in the case of a city without walls, when besieged its defenders fortify themselves in a camp round about it; as it is said, Ps. xxxiv. 7, “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them;” and, Zech. ix. 8, “I will encamp about mine house, because of the army, because of him that passeth by, and because of him that returneth.” Within the camp, or within the city walls, is the place of safety. So, amongst the Hebrews, without the camp, or without the gate, was the position for suffering the penalty of death. In Christ all is rest and quiet; out of Christ there is no peace. It is, perhaps, just the truth of this doctrine that is now about to be assailed—all the elements of self-justification, under the command of the legal accuser, are arrayed against it.

The issue now to be tried, we may say, is whether the beloved city, with its encampment, be sufficient to withstand all the earthly elements brought against it by this great adversary—whether the economy of grace, of which



the merits or righteousnesses of Jehovah alone constitute the defences, be a sufficient refuge from the wrath to come.

We suppose the *saints* here, or holy ones, to represent holy principles, (elements of this economy of grace,) these being the subjects of attack, on the part of the adversary and his forces. This economy of grace we presume to be termed the *beloved* city, because this plan of sovereign mercy is that in which divine goodness takes peculiar delight. As it is said, Ps. cxlviii. 10, 11, “He (the Lord) delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man”—he is not pleased with any means of salvation or deliverance other than those of his own providing: “The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.” The visitation of wrath is represented as his strange work, (Is. xxviii. 21,) while, on the other hand, it is declared he delighteth in mercy. For the same reason, apparently, Christ himself is declared to be the *beloved* Son of God; not merely that he is divine, or that he is an only Son, but that he is the means of redemption—the instrument of mercy, in which God delights. He is beloved on account of his office; on account of the functions of sovereign grace fulfilled in him. In other words, the work of redemption itself is God’s delight. He delights in being a Saviour, a Redeemer. The economy of grace is that over which he rejoices, and for this reason it is termed *beloved*. The legal dispensation was something going first into operation from necessity—as it was said, perhaps typically, concerning the first wife of the patriarch, (Gen. xxix. 26,) “It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the first-born”—something resulting from the nature of things. The gospel dispensation, on the contrary, is something freely given, or, rather, something adopted of choice, and therefore an object of delight with him by whom it has been thus prepared.

Such being the beloved city and its camp, it is here represented as in a state of siege,—encompassed with armies. It is a town without walls, as supposed at present. Its only reliance is upon Jehovah of hosts; He is its only wall, its only defence. As we might say of the gospel plan of salvation, it depends entirely upon the element of divine sovereignty to sustain it. “It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man”—“All nations,” says the Psalmist, “compassed me about: but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them,” (Ps. cxviii. 8, 9.) We suppose the cases to be analogous; one representing the position of the disciple himself, the other the position of that plan of salvation upon which the disciple rests his hope. If the beloved city fall before its enemies, the last hope of refuge for the sinner flying from offended justice is cut off forever.\*

\* This favoured city represents, no doubt, the same object as that symbolized by the holy city, (Rev. xi. 2,) although under different circumstances; and also as that

§ 454. ‘And fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.’—So it is said, (Ezek. xxxix. 6 and 9,) ‘And I will send a fire on Magog . . . . and they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the hand-staves, and the spears, and they shall burn them with fire seven years.’ The instrument of destruction in both cases is the same—the element of *fire*—the same consuming element as that which destroyed the harlot—the great commercial city—(the mercenary system.)

The conflict here represented is between the exhibition of truth and that of error, the beloved city and the camp of the saints being figures of the plan of salvation as set forth in the gospel; the hosts of Gog and Magog, on the other hand, representing the innumerable multitude of errors opposed to the truth as revealed in the Scriptures. The fire is the word of God—the revealed word, understood in its proper spiritual sense. Coming down from heaven, is its revelation; and coming immediately from God, may indicate this peculiar revelation to be that of the element of divine sovereignty, a truth overcoming all opposition. Or, perhaps, to be more definite, we may say, heaven is the written word; the fire out of heaven is the true or spiritual sense, educed from this written word. The spiritual understanding (Col. i. 9) is the gift of God; for which reason it is represented as fire coming *out of heaven, from God*. On this occasion this *fire* may apply particularly to that portion of truth which counteracts the delusion of the accuser. The truth that God is a *sovereign*, and that this sovereignty is the principle of his government, once fully manifested puts an end to all cavilling on the subject of redemption by grace. He has a right to do as he pleases with his own—every thing is his; as he is the only creator and preserver, so he is the only possessor and proprietor. There are none that can say unto him, What doest thou? The question of what he ought to do cannot be mooted. The only question to be asked is, What is his will? or, What has he declared to be his will? and, whatever that will may be, the only language for the creature to hold is, Let that will be done. No sooner, then, does God reveal, in a manner not to be misunderstood, the fact that salvation by *grace* is his will, than the plan of salvation represented by the beloved city is safe; every element hostile to it is devoured or consumed; the *armies of the aliens are put to flight*. As the blood of the Lamb (the element of divine propitiation) overcomes the dragon and his angels, (the elements of the law,) so the fire from God out of heaven, the

spoken of, Rev. iii. 12, (the city of my God;) but otherwise, this is the first intimation we have had of a city, the opposite of the great city, Babylon, just destroyed.

manifestation of the truth as it is in Jesus, overcomes (devours) every principle of error.

‘And the devil which deceived them was cast into the lake,’ &c.—The perverted views or errors, termed the *nations*, are represented as being all *entirely destroyed*. The verb employed is one signifying to eat, combined with an intensive; the same verb as that rendered (Rev. x. 9) by *eat up*; and the same verb as that employed to express the intention of the dragon towards the male-child, (Rev. xii. 4,) to devour or to destroy it *altogether*. These errors, therefore, may be supposed to be completely annihilated. Nothing remains of them after the exhibition of truth here contemplated. It is not so with the leader of the hostile band: he, too, is exposed to the destructive action of fire, but he is not supposed to be annihilated. His destruction is represented as something continually and perpetually in operation. He is cast into the *lake of fire and brimstone*: the element of sulphur being that giving perpetuity to the fire of the lake. The accusing spirit, the legal adversary, may thus be said to be ever in view. Those who are saved will have in contemplation, throughout eternity, the danger from which they have escaped—the adversary from whose power they have been preserved. Such contemplation, we may take it for granted, is necessary, and will be forever necessary, to perpetuate the gratitude of the ‘redeemed for the great salvation they enjoy. Throughout eternity the ransomed sinner will never forget the justice of his condemnation, and the freeness of that *grace* by which he has been saved from wrath, and made an heir of immortal happiness.

‘Where the beast and the false prophet (are).’—This seems to be added to remind us that the lake of fire is the same in both cases. It is something capable of acting upon the subjects represented by the beast and false prophet; and as these two elements are evidently things of a figurative character, so the lake into which they are cast is something of a like character; and, consequently, the torment of Satan here spoken of, must be of the same description as that undergone by these two first principles of error.

‘And shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever:’ or, as it might be rendered, And *they* shall be tormented, &c.; all three of them.—We were before told that the beast and false prophet were cast into this lake, but it was not then said for what purpose; now we have the further information that they, together with *the adversary*, are to be exposed to a continual and perpetual trial, or *torture*, as by fire—the fire of the Word of God; corresponding with the construction we have uniformly put upon the terms *βασανίζω*, *βασανισμός*, and upon the figures of sulphur and fire, and day and night.



## THE SECOND RESURRECTION.—THE SECOND JUDGMENT.

## —THE SECOND DEATH.

V. 11. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

Καὶ εἶδον θρόνον μέγαν λευκόν, καὶ τὸν καθήμενον ἐπ' αὐτοῦ, οὗ ἀπὸ προσώπου ἔφυγεν ἡ γῆ καὶ ὁ οὐρανός, καὶ τόπος οὐχ εὗρέθη αὐτοῖς.

§ 455. 'And I saw,' &c.—Comparing the commencement of this verse with the reference to him that sat on the throne, in the fifth verse of the next chapter, we perceive that the remainder of this chapter, together with the first eight verses of the next, constitutes the relation of one scene; the same throne, and the same occupant of the throne, being present throughout.

This is the second judgment scene described in this chapter, but, besides the figurative interval of a thousand years, it differs very materially from the preceding. In the first exhibition the apostle saw several thrones, seats, or tribunals, and, as implied, as many judges, or occupants of the seats, to whom judgment was given. But before these tribunals the combatants on the side of the conqueror only appeared; the functions of the judges seemingly being confined to the allotment of rewards to these followers of the victor. The remainder of the dead (those slain by the sword of the Word) are expressly declared not to have been resuscitated at that time, nor were they to be so till after the expiration of the thousand years; but as their resurrection at the end of that term is apparently implied, we may presume them to be now appearing at the second judgment. In the present exhibition there is seen but one throne or one tribunal, and but one judge. To him judgment is not said to be *given*. He is himself the source of judgment—the fountain of justice. Nor is it only one class of objects that is here said to be judged; although the fate of but one class is set forth in this chapter.

'A great white throne.'—A *white* throne is nowhere else mentioned in the Scriptures; but the term *white* appears to be so universally applied in the Apocalypse, in connection with some manifestation of divine righteousness, that we feel no hesitation in considering the throne here described as a representation of that moral perfection which manifests the supremacy of the divine character; the white throne, like the white horse and the white cloud, symbolizing that divine righteousness which constitutes at the same time the glory of the saints and the element essential to an exhibition of the sovereign power of Jehovah in the work of salvation.

'And him that sat thereon.'—The apostle seems intentionally to avoid stating who sat upon the throne, as if this were a mystery not yet fully developed. There can be no doubt but that this throne and its occupant

are those described Rev. iv. 3, the mode of manifestation only being different. As it is said, (Ps. xlvii. 48,) God sitteth on the throne of his holiness; so we may say here, God is manifested upon the throne of his *righteousness*—that is, of his own righteousness—that righteousness by which he sustains himself, (Is. lix. 16;) allusion being made to the same throne in the promise of the Saviour, Rev. iii. 21: “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit upon *my* throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne.” The follower of Jesus is exalted by God’s righteousness or holiness, and not by his own—corresponding with the assurance of the Psalmist, “In thy name shall they rejoice all the day, and *in thy* righteousness shall they be exalted,” (Ps. lxxxix. 16.)

The Son of God as the Lamb had overcome, (Rev. iii. 21;) by his blood he had overcome, (Rev. xii. 11;) and as the Word of God he had overcome, (Rev. xix. 21;) and now the apostle sees the same divine Being on the great white throne, manifested to be identic with the Father—exalted and upheld by the same righteousness.

This exhibition of sovereignty, and of the Lamb or Word of God as the supreme Judge, may be considered virtually a result of the defeat of the accuser and his forces, of that of the beast and of the kings of the earth, as well as of the destruction of Babylon, and of the fiery trial to which the beast and false prophet and accuser are perpetually exposed. The fact of this sovereignty must have been always the same, in the nature of things; but there is a gradual development of the truth. The extreme hatefulness and fallacy of the mercenary system must be exhibited before the claims of self-righteousness can be manifested to be groundless; these claims must be shown to be extinguished before the power of the accuser can be *manifestly* overcome; the complete subjugation of the accuser’s power must be exhibited before the supremacy of Christ’s righteousness can be exhibited; and the predominance of the merits of Christ (the righteousness of God in

Christ) over every other principle opposed to the salvation of the sinner must be shown, before the power of divine sovereignty can be exhibited. A gradual development of this kind is indicated by the apostle Paul, (1 Cor. xv. 23-25.) Each in its own order, (as the passage might be rendered;) first Christ, then those that are of Christ at his appearance: then the end when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God and to the Father; when he shall have caused *to pass away* all rule, and all authority and power; for he must reign [his merits must be manifested to predominate] till he hath put all enemies under his feet: the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

This crisis we have the more reason to believe to be apocalyptically reached in this passage, as we find the destruction of *death* (the last enemy) to be one of the results of this second judgment, (v. 14.)

§ 456. 'From whose face the earth and the heaven fled away ; and there was found no place for them.'—This figure probably corresponds with what Paul terms the passing away or abolishing of all rule, and all authority and power. So we may say a manifestation of Christ as Jehovah our righteousness causes an entire change in all previous views of divine government, not even admitting of their continuance. And as such a manifestation necessarily draws a line of discrimination between all that is true and all that is false in matters of religious doctrine, it is virtually a judging of these things ; corresponding with the description in this passage of the great tribunal and its action—the great white throne and him that sat upon it, from whose sight even the heaven fled away.

It was said, Rev. vi. 14, that the heaven departed, or was rolled up (§ 161) like a scroll, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places, and (xvi. 20) every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. In the change now spoken of, the whole earth is said to flee away ; the representation differing in degree, but being the same in kind. We think the epoch in all these relations may be considered the same ; the development of the truth only being progressive. At first the confidence of the sinner in earthly means of refuge (§ 161) is shaken ; mountains and islands are moved out of their places, and the refugees are flying from rock to rock, and from mountain to mountain, but they still call upon these vain objects of trust for shelter from the wrath to come. We next see a shaking of the whole earthly system, involving a dissolution of the mixed or mercenary scheme of salvation : every island has fled away, and the mountains are not found,—the hail sweeping away the refuge of lies ;—the various shifts and devices of self-confidence are manifested to be mere illusions. And lastly, the whole scheme of man's dependence upon any works or merits of his own, even the supposition of his being so placed under the law, is shown to be incapable of withstanding the judgment of Him who sitteth upon the throne.

Not only the earth, the heaven also is seen to flee away ; as it is said, Heb. xii. 26, (in allusion to Haggai ii. 6, and Is. xiii. 13,) "But now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven : " and as it is predicted, Is. xxxiv. 4, "And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll ; and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine," &c. ; and, 2 Peter iii. 10, 13, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night ; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. . . . Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."



In this last quotation we find a key to the reason why the heavens as well as the earth are thus the subjects of change, viz., that in the *old heaven*, as well as the *old earth*, righteousness does not dwell. They cannot withstand the searching eye of Him who sits upon the throne, because in them no righteousness is found—they do not furnish it; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight.

The only true righteousness is that of Jehovah himself. There is no other, in the strict sense of the term. Consequently, any plan of salvation, any exhibition of the position of man, or of the government of God, deficient in showing God's righteousness to be the only righteousness—the only means of justification—must be incapable of meeting the approbation of the omniscient Judge and Sovereign. Every plan or scheme, without this requisite, must flee, as it were, from before his face. Such we suppose to be the earth and heaven spoken of in the description of this *apocalyptic judgment*. They are exhibitions of man's position, and of God's scheme of government, (including his plan of redemption,) of which the righteousness of God, as the only means of salvation, does not form an essential part. For this reason, *there is no place for them*, so soon as Jehovah is manifested on the white throne of his own righteousness; as if it were argued, Since the Supreme Being himself must be sustained by his own perfect righteousness, how can man be exalted, sustained, or even saved by any other righteousness?

It may be difficult to define precisely the distinction between the exhibition designated as heaven, and that designated as the earth; but it is very plain, from the manner in which the apostle Paul uses these figures, that he applies them both to a change from the legal to the gospel dispensation, as he says, in connection with the quotation we have just now made, (Heb. xii. 27,) "And this, yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain."

We suppose the things which cannot be shaken to be the things of the kingdom of God—the principles of the economy of grace, as they have existed in the divine mind from all eternity, and as they are revealed in the sacred Scriptures when these Scriptures are spiritually understood. All things short of these must be designed only for a temporary purpose—they were made to be shaken, and made to be changed. Such was man's original position by nature, and such was the legal dispensation; and such must be any view even of the gospel dispensation, or of the whole word of revelation, not according with a just view of divine sovereignty, and of man's entire dependence upon the unmerited favour of his Redeemer.

We presume, of course, the heaven here seen to pass away, not to be the heaven into which John was permitted to enter in vision, nor that denominated by Paul the third heaven; both of these corresponding appa-

rently with the new heaven mentioned in the next chapter. Something analogous to the Jewish idea of three heavens, one above the other, we suppose to prevail throughout the Apocalypse—three successive exhibitions of the truths of revelation ; the last, or *spiritual*, corresponding with the Jewish ethereal region, being that which is to remain ; the others, as of a temporary and earthly or mixed character, are destined to be changed, dissolved, or to pass away. We judge of the meaning of this term, as in other cases, according to the circumstances and connection in which it is used.

Whatever difficulty there may be in arriving at an exact analysis of this passage, as heaven and earth comprehend all visible objects, to speak of these as having fled away, must be equivalent to a representation of the disappearance of all previous views of the subject under contemplation, (the subject comprehended in the *unveiling* of Jesus Christ ;) these old views cannot withstand or *abide* (Mal. iii. 2) the manifestation now made. The whole construction of the revealed word being changed, there is no longer room for them ; as it is said in the next chapter, with reference to the same change, “The former things have passed away,” and as Paul expresses it, Heb. x. 9, “He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second ;” with this difference, however, that this last passage refers to the fact itself of the substitution of the new economy for the old or legal dispensation, while the language of the Apocalypse refers to a manifestation of this fact, through the right understanding of the revealed word—an understanding effecting such a change of views as to be compared to a perfect oblivion of the past : (Is. lxv. 17,) “The former [heaven and earth] shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.”

Vs. 12-15. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God ; and the books were opened : and another book was opened, which is (the book) of life : and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it ; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them : and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Καὶ εἶδον τοὺς νεκροὺς, τοὺς μεγάλους καὶ τοὺς μικροὺς, ἑστῶτας ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου, καὶ βιβλία ἡνοιχθήσαν· καὶ ἄλλο βιβλίον ἡνοιχθή, ὃ ἐστὶ τῆς ζωῆς· καὶ ἐκρίθησαν οἱ νεκροὶ ἐκ τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐν τοῖς βιβλίοις κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν. Καὶ ἔδοικεν ἡ θάλασσα τοὺς νεκροὺς τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ, καὶ ὁ θάνατος καὶ ὁ ᾄδης ἔδωκαν τοὺς νεκροὺς τοὺς ἐν αὐτοῖς· καὶ ἐκρίθησαν ἕκαστος κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν. Καὶ ὁ θάνατος καὶ ὁ ᾄδης ἐβλήθησαν εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός· οὗτος ὁ θάνατος ὁ δευτέρος ἐστίν, ἡ λίμνη τοῦ πυρός. Καὶ εἴ τις οὐκ εὔρεθαι ἐν τῇ βίβλῳ τῆς ζωῆς γεγραμμένος, ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός.

§ 457. ‘And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God ;’—or, according to our Greek edition, ‘stand before the throne.’ The difference is not material, except that, as we apprehend, the Deity himself is not yet

supposed to be fully revealed, as the occupant of the throne ; this is to be gathered from the subsequent narration. The Rider of the white horse, the King of kings, the Word of God, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, after having brought all enemies under subjection, may be now considered manifested upon this tribunal of judgment. On this account, we think our Greek to be here the correct reading.

In the commencement of this chapter, (v. 5,) after speaking of the souls of those slain by the *axe*, the remainder of the dead were said not to live again until the termination of the thousand years. The narrative then continues without interruption ; in the course of which the thousand years is represented as having terminated ; and in the twelfth verse, after the intervening of six verses only, the dead are described as seen standing before the throne. This closeness of connection seems to leave us no choice, but to suppose the dead thus seen to be the remaining ones of the dead mentioned in the fifth verse ; and these, for the reason given, (§ 449,) we suppose to be the dead slain in the great battle of Armageddon by the sword of the Word—the dead who did not rise till after the expiration of the thousand years.

Those reigning with Christ during the thousand years cannot be the dead now seen, for, having had part in the first resurrection, having been pronounced blessed and holy, and having been declared exempt from the power of the second death, they must have been justified, and therefore no longer the subjects of judgment. Those overcome in the second campaign, (the attack upon the camp of the saints,) are said to be all destroyed by fire from heaven ; and the action of fire appears to be uniformly in Scripture the figure of a *final* destruction. In addition to this, the terms “small and great” correspond with the description given of the forces of the beast, among whom there appears every variety of rank and grade ; while the forces of Satan, in the assault upon the beloved city, are mentioned only as the nations of the earth.

These dead, then, appearing at this second judgment, we apprehend to be the component parts of the forces of the kings of the earth, and of the followers of the beast, including perhaps some of them *coerced* into the service of the blasphemous despot ; that is, they are the *inhabiters* of the *earth*—the dwellers upon the earth—those against whom, with a certain exception, the three woes were pronounced. Apocalyptically, we suppose them to be all the elements or principles peculiar to the earthly system.

All these followers of the beast, with the kings of the earth, were slain by the sword out of the mouth of the Word, and their flesh was given to the birds ; but, notwithstanding this, it is implied that, like human beings slain in battle, they are capable of being resuscitated, and of appearing in judgment : their destruction on the field of Armageddon was not final.



Their leader, however, (the beast,) with his *aid*, (the false prophet,) met with a different fate: they were both of them cast into the lake of fire, whence we do not afterwards hear of their being delivered, even for a season.

As among the inhabitants of the earth, there were apparently some that did not worship the beast, and that did not receive his mark, (Rev. xiii. 8, and xvii. 8,) so it seems to be implied that, amongst those now said to be standing in judgment, there are some (exceptions to a general rule) to be found in the book of life—the trial itself turning upon this issue.

§ 458. ‘And the books were opened: and another book was opened;’ or, ‘And books were opened.’—There being no article in the original in connection with the word books, we may understand it or not, as accords best with the sense. If understood, we seem to be directed to some books previously mentioned; and in this Apocalypse we meet with no allusion to any other books than that opened by the Lamb, and the little book swallowed by the apostle, together with the book of life, (Rev. iii. 5, xiii. 8, and xvii. 8,) and this book of Revelation itself; or, if we retain the article, we may suppose *the books* to designate the books of the Old Testament, received by the Jews as canonical, comprehending the law and the prophets to the time of the restoration. As the term is used in Ezra vi. 1, “Search was made in the house of *the books*,” (margin;) and Dan. ix. 2, “I understood by *books*;” that is, of course, the sacred books, called, amongst the Jews, probably by way of distinction, *the books*.

Written without the article, however, we may suppose an indefinite plural to be put here for the dual number, (as in the use of the word *times*, Dan. xii. 7, and Rev. xii. 14;) the books opened being two books, and these two books, *the law and the testimony*, pre-eminently *criteria* in matters of doctrine;—as it was said of all pretensions to an interpretation of the divine will, Is. viii. 19, 20, “When they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits,” &c. . . . . “Should not a people seek unto their God?” . . . . . “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

It will be perceived that, as we do not suppose this judgment scene to represent *literally* the trial of human beings, so neither do we suppose these books to represent records of the actions of such beings: they represent only something analogous to such records, and to things pertaining to such a trial. Elements of doctrine, compared with the *law* and *the testimony*, or with Moses and the prophets, are represented as human beings, tried by what is written of them in certain books of record.

Corresponding with this view, we take *the other book*—the book of life—to represent the gospel; or, rather, all that belongs to that plan of salvation of which we have an account in the gospel. This book of life, we

presume to be the same as that spoken of on former occasions as the Lamb's book of life ; of which we have before remarked, (§§ 87, 305,) that its contents are not the names of human beings, in a literal sense, but the principles or elements of the economy of grace. The use of these two first books, accordingly, may be that of ascertaining whether the principles, doctrines, or systems tried, belong to God's plan of salvation (the other book) or not. If not, they are given over to the exhibition of their true character, represented as a trial by *fire*—the action of the Word of God—as a perpetual test : an action compared to that of an immense furnace or lake of fire and brimstone ; the latter element representing the unceasing and perpetual character of this trial.

'And the dead were judged out of the things written in the books, according to their works.'—Principles of a certain character generate only what Paul terms *dead works*, (Heb. ix. 14 ;) works involved in those elementary views which the disciple is exhorted to lay aside, as he advances in the knowledge of the truth, (Heb. vi. 1.) Opposites of these dead works are those of him who serves the living God. Faith in the atonement of Christ changes the character of these works, purging the conscience from apprehension of the penalty of guilt, and inducing a service of God from a sense of gratitude. The principles generating dead works, we take to be those impelling the disciple to action from mercenary motives—the dread of punishment and the hope of reward ; the opposite principles are such as stimulate his obedience by a grateful remembrance of the unmerited mercy of God, in the salvation of his soul. The latter principles are those found in the Lamb's book of life ; for in that there is no room for the element of apprehension. The other principles tried by the law and the testimony, are proved and manifested not to belong to this book of life ; and, consequently, are doomed to an endless exhibition of their condemnation. Both classes are judged according to what is written of them in the two books, the law and the testimony ; and by this trial, comparing their tendencies with what these statutes require, it is ascertained whether they belong or not to the third book.

The dead here seen on trial we suppose to be of both classes ; all of them have been slain while in the service of the beast ; but when released from this service, some of them, like captives released from Babylon, may prove to belong to the true view of God's plan of redemption, (the book of life.) "The law is good, if a man use it lawfully ;" so the principles of the law are good, if lawfully used ; in which case they may be said to be found written in the Lamb's book of life ; but if unlawfully used, they are in the service of the beast and of the accuser. It is then that they are slain by the sword of the Spirit, and that they are given over to trial by the Word of God as by fire. Some principles, however, are no doubt radically and

altogether wrong ; they are incapable of serving God, or of promoting his glory ; and these, when tried by what is written in the law and the testimony, are utterly condemned. Such are all the elements of self-righteousness, self-dependence, pride, and vainglory, “small and great.”

§ 459. ‘And the sea gave up the dead which were in it.’—Three different receptacles of the dead are described in this passage as simultaneously giving up their contents. In the ordinary sense, one of these (death) would comprehend the other two ; those drowned in the *sea*, as well as those in the *grave*, or in *hades*, (hell,) being all the subjects of death. The peculiarity of the classification is itself a caution against the adoption of any ordinary sense.

The earth (the land) and the heaven having fled away, the first may be said to have given up its dead, in the persons of those described as the *remaining* ones, (*οἱ λοιποί*), dwellers upon the earth, elements of the earthly system. The sea, as distinguished from the land, we have taken to be the figure of judicial wrath, (§ 124 ;) a system exhibiting the terrors of the law. As such it has its dead principles—principles extending no further than to influence the disciple’s conduct from motives of fear, being in themselves dead elements, and bringing forth only *dead works*. Some of these principles may be contemplated, perhaps, like those of the law lawfully used, as bringing the disciple to Christ ; in which case they are found in the book of life—the action of the present judgment being, as we suppose, that of making the discrimination between them.

‘And death and hell gave up the dead which were in them.’—We have already given our reasons for considering these terms appellations of doctrinal systems, (§§ 156, 157,) creating positions analogous to those usually imputed to death and the grave, or the state immediately subsequent to death. To these inseparable companions (inseparable so far as the sinner *out of Christ* is subject to them) power was given (Rev. vi. 8) over the *fourth* of the earth, to kill with the sword, with hunger, with death, and with the beasts of the earth, (§§ 158, 159.) They may be now contemplated as called upon to give an account of their use of this power. Their dead may be those whom they have killed—the principles, motives, &c., which through their instrumentality are manifested to be *dead works* ; or their dead may be the elements of the systems by which their power has been exercised : perhaps the result under either construction would not materially differ. They are systems, in effect, of condemnation, sustained by the element of self-righteousness, (the *green horse*,) an opposite of the divine righteousness represented by the *white horse*. Their own elements, or those subject to their power, are equally dead works.

‘And they were judged every man according to their works ;’ or, as the original may be rendered, ‘They were judged *each* according to their works :’



Καὶ ἐκρίθησαν ἕκαστος κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν. *Et judicati sunt singuli secundum opera ipsorum*, (G. and L.) The words *every man*, in our common and other English versions, seem to have been introduced under a misapprehension of the subjects in contemplation. The sea, and death, and hell, have given up their dead, and they are judged *each*\* according to their works—according to what they have just given up. These systems are judged; the tendencies of their principles are examined—compared with what is written in the books (the law and the testimony.) The sea is not said to be condemned—the law, lawfully used, may be found written in the book of life; but the other two, as appears from what follows, have not a saving principle in them.

We usually suppose *hell* to be the place of punishment after judgment and condemnation; but here we see *hell* delivering up its dead to be judged. We cannot suppose punishment to be inflicted first, and judgment to be passed afterwards. Neither can we suppose the sea, in the ordinary sense, to have some dead to give up, and death some others, and hell some others; but there is no difficulty in supposing them, as so many systems, to have each their respective principles or elements—their tendencies or works—by which they are now judged.

§ 460. ‘And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire.’—These two elements, according to the preceding verse, have just been tried; sentence has been passed upon them, and they are now described as undergoing the execution of that sentence. The sea is not mentioned as exposed to the same fate; apparently because, for the reason just given, (§ 459,) it is not a subject of condemnation. It is besides correct in itself, and therefore has no fallacies calling for the action of fire to expose their true character.

This *lake* is the same, no doubt, as that into which the false prophet, the beast, and the accuser have been cast: and the purpose with regard to

\* The Tyndale, Cranmer, and Geneva versions, employ the term *every man*; the Rheims version renders the passage, “and it was judged of every one.” Wiclif uses the distributive pronoun *each*, but by his previous use of the expression *dead men*, it is evident that he takes the whole representation in the ordinary sense: “I saie *deed men*, greet and smale, stonding in the sigt of the trone: and bookis werun opened, and another book was opened: which is the book of liif, and *deed men* werun demed of the thingis that weren writun in the bookis aftir the werkis of hem, and the see gaf his *deed men*: that werun in it, deeth and helle gauen her *deed men*: that weren in hem, it was demed of eche: after the werkis of hem, helle and deeth weren sent into a pool of fier, this is the secunde deeth, he that was not foundun writun in the book of liif: was sente into the pool of fier.”

The Greek term *νεκρός*, thus rendered dead in the singular, and dead men in the plural, might be more strictly rendered *dead body* or *dead bodies*; the term in the Greek being commonly applied to human carcasses—Vid. Donnegan—*νεκρός*, a dead body. In this sense it is used, Rev. xvi. 3, αἷμα ὡς νεκροῦ, blood, as of a dead body. So we find it employed by the LXX, in the account given, Gen. xxiii. 3-15, of the

death and hell must be the same as that before declared with regard to the other elements, (v. 10,) that they should be tormented day and night for ever and ever—tortured, tried, as prisoners on the rack, with the view of extorting confession, (§§ 210, 334.) The interpretation we have before adopted with regard to this lake, or furnace of fire, (§ 440,) is the only one admissible here.

Death and hell, apocalyptically, are systems, assemblages of doctrine. They cannot be, literally, affected by fire; nor can they be sensible of punishment; but their fallacies, as systems of salvation, or as exhibitions of man's position, may be exposed. It may be shown, and forever shown, that they are incapable of giving life; that their tendency is only that of eternal destruction—that of retaining the sinner in a position of hopeless condemnation. This is to be manifested by a just application of the word of God to entire systems, as well as to their elements. The time for this process has now come: as systems they have been tried by the law and the testimony; they have been found not to bring forth a single principle belonging to the book of life, and they are now doomed to exhibit their perfect incongruity with the economy of grace, by an everlasting exposure to the action of the revealed word, spiritually understood—a word compared by God himself to a *fire*, (Jer. xxiii. 29,) and variously spoken of, according to the degree of its development, as the fire which is to try every work, (1 Cor. iii. 13,) and the fire which is to burn as an oven, acting as a refiner's fire, and as fuller's soap, (Mal. iii. 2.)

'This is the second death;' or, according to our Greek, 'This is the second death, the lake of fire.'—Death and hell are cast into the second death! the first death, apparently, is cast into the second death! *Hades*, a term in any sense applicable to something subsequent to death, is itself also

negotiation of Abraham for a place to bury his dead (bodies.) The pagan notion of the semi-materiality of departed spirits, allowed of the employment of the term in describing the supposed state of the soul in the lower regions: as *νεκροβαγής*, *laden with the dead*, said of Charon's boat, (Jones's Lex.) Otherwise to speak of a soul as dead, would be a contradiction in terms.

Dr. Jones supposes the Greek adjective *νεκρός* to be derived from the Hebrew נָכַר *Naker*, signifying *separate*—"separated from the living;"—with which we might associate only the idea of a separation of the spirit or soul from the body, and thus apply the term to either member of the union. But according to Trommius, נָכַר signifies *alienation*—something regarded as foreign—as we may suppose the Gentiles were contemplated by the Jews. And as the bodies of dead persons, among the Hebrews, were set apart or separated as *unclean*, the almost uniform use of this term, therefore, appears to involve its application, as a figure, to something the opposite of what is *spiritual*; accordingly, we suppose these apocalyptic dead (bodies) to represent principles, or doctrinal elements, depending upon a literal or carnal construction of the language of revelation, as opposed to the *spiritual understanding*.

exposed to the second death ! The anomaly presented by this figure must be intended to prove a bar to any interpretation approaching a literal construction. Whatever this second death be, it is something capable of acting upon death and hell, as well as upon the beast, the false prophet, and the accuser, while incapable of acting upon those *beheaded* for the witness of Jesus. It is at the same time something subsequent, in the order of revelation at least, to both the first and second resurrection ; although not so in every case, as we find the beast and the false prophet were exposed immediately to the second death, without any reference to either of these resurrections.

We do not suppose this term *second*, however, to be employed in a literal sense. It is *second* as being greater in importance, and second, perhaps, as a spiritual understanding is to a natural understanding ; as it is said, 1 Cor. xv. 46, “ That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, afterwards that which is spiritual.” So, this *second* death may apply to the final exhibition of revealed truth, in its spiritual sense, as we have considered the action of the fire from heaven upon the besiegers of the beloved city a *final* development of this character.

The first death apparently corresponds with the state of the slain after the battle of Armageddon, whose flesh was given to the ravenous birds. It is characteristic of the peculiar helplessness and destitution of merit incident to the position of the disciple under the law ; as it is described by the apostle, Rom. vii. 9, When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. Hell, or hades, and death may be considered almost as interchangeable terms ; hell representing the position of hopelessness attributed to the bottomless pit. Thus Satan may be said to have suffered the first death when he was confined to the pit for a thousand years ; as he was afterwards doomed to the second death in the lake of fire.

By way of distinction, we may denominate the first death, perhaps, the *legal system*, and Hades the *bottomless pit system*. The action of the sword of the Spirit exhibits the destructive character of these systems to those dependent upon them ; the action of the *fire from heaven*, or of the *lake of fire*, exhibits the destruction of these systems themselves ; death and the bottomless pit being both subjected to the perpetual test represented by the unquenchable fire of the lake. The first death, like Apollyon with his host from the pit, destroys the hopes of the disciple ; the *second* death destroys the destroyer, as well as every element co-operating with him ; while the casting of Hell into the lake of fire, is equivalent to casting the bottomless pit into that lake, both figures being equally incapable of a literal or ordinary construction.

Whatever the lake of fire be, and however difficult it may be to define its action upon these two elements, it is evident that the power of death and



hell is here represented as having terminated : "Death is swallowed up in victory." A consummation is unfolded, enabling the reader to exclaim with Paul, in view of this happy result of the great work of redemption, "O death ! where is thy sting ? O grave ! (Hades) where is thy victory ? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law ; but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ," (1 Cor. xv. 55.)

§ 461. 'And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.'—The indefinite pronoun *τις*, (any one,) translated here *whosoever*, and in some versions by *he that*, (Wiclif and Rheims,) does not necessarily refer to a human being. Death and hell in the Greek are nouns of the masculine gender, and *τις* may be put for any like noun of that gender—a system, or the element of a system. The case is similar to that in the preceding verse, where *ἐκαστος*, although *masculine*, may refer, as we have supposed it to do, to death or hell, as grammatically as it would do to *man*, if that were understood. The passage, accordingly, might be rendered, "Whatever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire ;" that is, every doctrinal principle proving, by the test administered, (the law and the testimony,) not to belong to the economy of redemption by grace, (the book of life,) is doomed to a perpetual exhibition of its incompatibility with that great object of divine revelation ;—the unquenchable fire forever manifesting the *destructible* character of every principle hostile to a just exhibition of that economy. In this respect, we do not attach much importance to the grammatical distinction just noticed ; for if it were otherwise, and the word *man* were absolutely introduced, we should consider the figure of personification, so uniformly prevailing throughout the book, to be employed here as elsewhere ; doctrinal principles and elements being spoken of as human beings.\*

We had occasion to notice in the commencement of these remarks, (§§ 38, 155,) the distinction between the Greek terms *ᾠδης*, (Hades,) and *γεέννα*, (Gehenna,) both alike rendered in our common version by the word *hell*. The latter (Gehenna) only being applied in other parts of the New Testament, where it occurs, to the state of future punishment. Even this is a figurative term, supposed to have been derived from a valley in the

\* Although this book of life is not to be taken as containing literally the names of human beings destined to be saved, the figure itself may be borrowed from the practice of some of the Roman emperors, who are said to have furnished the magistrates with lists of proscription, designating those to be condemned ; under the colour indeed of an administration of justice, but really with reference only to the will of the despot. The difference, however, in the two cases is, that one is exactly the converse of the other ; the book of life exhibits the objects of mercy, while the imperial proscription lists enumerated only the victims of wanton and unjustifiable cruelty.

vicinity of Jerusalem, where the offal and carrion of the city were conveyed to be destroyed by continual fires kept up for that purpose. Hence the name of the valley became appropriately, amongst the Jews, the appellation for a future state of endless torment. It is said, indeed, to signify in the Syriac language the infernal regions, *Syriacè*, *Infernus*, (Leusden;) but whether the Syriac appellation was applied to the valley, or the name of the valley with the use to which it was appropriated furnished to the Syrians a term for the lower regions, does not appear. However this be, the appellation (*Gehenna*) is not met with at all in the Apocalypse, and this apparently for the reason we have already given, (§ 38.) For the same reason, we think the apocalyptic lake or pool of fire, or of fire and brimstone, is not an equivalent, as a figure, for the *Gehenna* of Matthew, Mark, and Luke; this term expressly designating something, to the action of which both the soul and body of man may be exposed, Matt. v. 22–30, x. 28; but, although not equivalents, there may be a certain analogy between the two figures.

The Apocalypse, we may say, assumes the doctrine of a future state of punishment to be indisputable; this punishment is almost universally spoken of as a state of eternal torment or torture as by fire; analogous, therefore, to this, the false systems, false doctrines, and abominable principles or elements of doctrine, the history of which has been so prominent a subject of this revelation, are now exhibited as given over to an everlasting torture or trial, eternally and forever exposing their delusions and their hatefulness.

*Death* and *hell* are mysteries, of which Christ declares himself to have the *keys*, (Rev. i. 18.) These mysteries are delusive doctrinal systems, such as we have uniformly here considered them. The opening of these mysteries consists in the development of their true character as doctrinal systems; and this development constitutes in effect their destruction. Jesus Christ may be said to employ these keys in that unveiling of himself, in this book, by which the truth is manifested. This manifestation of truth being the destruction of error, death and hell are virtually cast by it into the lake of fire.

The same rule of construction must apply to the pronoun *τις*, whether we render it *whoever* or *whatever*. The element or instrument of perdition is the same, and every thing to which this pronoun may relate, or which it is intended to represent, must be of the same *genus* as these two mysteries of which it shares the fate. The *apocalyptic* lake of *fire* then must be the instrument of exhibiting perpetually the destruction of all doctrinal systems and principles, not belonging to the economy of grace; and this instrument can be nothing else than the revealed word of God properly understood.

As we do not suppose this lake of fire to represent the future punishment of human beings, although perhaps something analogous to it, so

neither have we considered either of the judgment scenes depicted in this chapter, designed to represent what is commonly understood by the *last judgment*; not that a solemn crisis of this character is not to be expected, but that the subject of this revelation does not call for such an exhibition.

We presume the Apocalypse to be confined to the treatment of doctrinal views of the divine scheme of redemption, and their opposite errors. The doctrine of a final judgment, in the common acceptation of the term, is taken (as in the case of that of future rewards and punishments) to be indisputable. The common and almost universal apprehension of the manner of that judgment is adopted; and from these views, familiar as they are to the great mass of mankind, an analogous picture is drawn, representing the discriminating effect in matters of doctrine, of a triumphant manifestation of the Lamb once slain as Jehovah our righteousness. Christ, thus manifested, exalted on the throne of divine righteousness, fulfils in effect the functions of a judge; "showing judgment to the Gentiles, (nations;) sending forth judgment to victory," (Matt. xii. 18, 21;) and "executing the judgment committed to him by the Father," (John v. 22, and 27.)

It is not designed, we apprehend, that our belief of a future judgment and state of retribution should rest upon these figurative illustrations of the book of Revelation; and even when the *day of judgment* is spoken of elsewhere in Scripture, it is evident that we are not to take the expression in an ordinary sense, confining our ideas to the transactions of a single day, or to the forms of judicial process of a human tribunal. The point of importance calling for our attention is, that there is *virtually* a judgment to come—*virtually* a period "when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ," and render to every man according to his deeds, (Rom. ii. 6, 16.)

The whole tenor of Scripture teaches us that we are perpetually in the presence of our final Judge, from whose judgment no thought or action of our lives escapes unnoticed. To impress this solemn truth in the strongest manner upon minds of every capacity, the anthropological figure of an appointed day is employed in the sacred writings. But God cannot need a day when he will determine whether any of his creatures are good or bad. He cannot need books or records, either to remind him of our actions, or of his own enactments, or of his own provisions of mercy. He cannot need even that we give an account literally to him, for He knoweth all things, and must have already decided upon all that we have done. The Scriptures teach us even more: they teach us that in the sight of God we are not merely on trial, we are already condemned—sentence is passed upon us. Depending upon our own merits, we have no hope of escape.



Our only hope even now is to fly for refuge to the provision of sovereign grace. We are not to flatter ourselves with the prospect of experimenting upon the issue of divine judgment first, and then, if we are unable to justify ourselves, to appeal to a promise of mercy ; but *now* is the day of salvation. We are already informed of the result of the trial, and have but one course to pursue—the only course to which a condemned, sentenced criminal can resort, that of relying alone upon the exercise of the pardoning power, peculiarly the attribute of sovereignty ; and this in the way pointed out by the Sovereign himself—a position very happily set forth by a truly evangelical poet :—

Hark ! universal nature shook and groan'd :  
 'Twas the last trumpet—see the Judge enthron'd ;  
 Rouse all your courage at your utmost need ;  
 Now, summon every virtue—stand and plead.  
 What ! silent ? Is your boasting heard no more ?  
 That self-renouncing wisdom, learn'd before,  
 Had shed immortal glories on your brow,  
 That all your virtues cannot purchase now.

All joy to the believer ! He can speak—  
 Trembling, yet happy ; confident, yet meek.

Since the dear hour that brought me to thy foot,  
 And cut up all my follies by the root,  
 I never trusted in an arm but thine,  
 Nor hop'd but in thy righteousness divine :

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* my only plea,

Is what it was, dependence upon *thee*.—(COWPER'S TRUTH.)

## RETROSPECT.

In the narrative just finished we have seen, as a portion of the results of the great battle of Armageddon, the arrest of Satan, and his confinement to the bottomless pit for a thousand years ; and, for a corresponding period, the triumphant reign of those *slain by the are* for the testimony of Jesus ; extending to a stage of revelation equivalent, as we suppose, to a development of the principles and character of the Christian *rest* ;—this manifestation resulting from the overthrow of the beast and false prophet, and from an exhibition of the confinement of the power of the legal adversary to the bottomless pit position—the opposite of that of *rest*. At this epoch, the blasphemous element (self) has gone into perdition ; the element of misinterpretation, through the influence of which an image of self-righteousness had been created as an object of idolatrous worship, is also destroyed. The fate of the image itself, we presume to be involved in that of the false construction so instrumental in bringing it into being ; the existence of the one ceasing with the exposure of the fallacy of the other. The enemies of Christ, those endeavouring to rob him of the glory of his work of redemption, are thus seen to be overcome. The Word of God has conquered, and the King of kings is manifested to have trodden the wine-press alone : he is the only Redeemer, and beside him there is no Saviour.

But it yet remains to be manifested, that this *only Redeemer* is able to save *to the uttermost* ; that Satan, the legal adversary of the sinner, and the powers of death and hell, are subject to that Word by which the kings of the earth, the beast, and false prophet, are proved to have been overcome. For the purpose of this manifestation, apparently, Satan is released, or appears as released from his bottomless pit confinement, and is permitted to rally all his remaining auxiliaries ; the nations of the earth, Gog and Magog, calling in, as we may imagine, death and hell as his trusty allies. Their great and final effort is to try the strength of the beloved city, of which the only wall of salvation is the Lord of Hosts : or rather, to try the strength of the wall itself. A powerful revelation of divine truth, (the word of God fully developed,)—fire from God out of heaven—destroys, entirely consumes all the forces of these adversaries ; the three leaders being reserved, as it were, for a more exemplary punishment. The legal accuser, Satan, is immediately cast into the lake of fire, as a rebel taken in arms against his sovereign is executed without even the form of trial. He has now, like the beast, gone into perdition—his power is manifested to be entirely destroyed.

The dragon was long since overcome in heaven, in the contest with Michael and his angels ; but he was suffered to exercise a certain power on

earth through the instrumentality of the beast ; this instrument being destroyed, his dominion was manifested to be restricted to a certain position : out of this position, he no sooner exerts his power against the divine provision of redemption than he is immediately cast down—manifested to be exposed to that action of the revealed word, which consumes him with an everlasting burning.

Something analogous to this, we think, may be familiar to the mind of the experienced Christian disciple. While believing himself under the law, he sees the adversary of his soul in power, even in heaven. Having made greater progress in the knowledge of religious truth, but still going about to establish a righteousness of his own, under a mistaken apprehension of the gospel economy, he feels himself under the dominion of the beast and under the influence of the false prophet, forming within his own heart an image of his fancied moral perfection, to which he is ascribing the glory of his eternal salvation. Delivered from this delusion, contemplating the Word, the Lamb of God, as the King of kings and the only Redeemer, Jehovah his righteousness, he lives and reigns with Christ, (Gal. ii. 20, Rom. v. 17,) enjoying a millennial *rest*, in perfect confidence that the power of the adversary is confined to a position of an entirely different character from that in which, by sovereign grace, he has himself been placed. No sooner, however, is there a wavering of his faith in the sufficiency of his Redeemer's merits, than he sees Satan released from his confinement, and he trembles lest the provision of redeeming mercy (the beloved city) should be incapable of withstanding the power of the legal adversary, with the elements of condemnation arrayed against him. In this state of apprehension, nothing can allay his fears but a right understanding of the revealed word of God, (the fire from God out of heaven.) This understanding possessed, Satan is seen, not only as lightning falling from heaven, but also as cast into the lake of fire—as exposed to the never-ending trial of the test of divine revelation.

Although the accuser however is removed, the systems connected with his power are supposed to be still remaining. As if it were urged, that without the fear of legal condemnation, as without the motive of self-interest, the disciple would not bring forth works to the glory of God. From the necessity of impelling the performance of these works, therefore, the systems or mysteries represented by death and hell, must remain in operation.

To manifest the inconsistency of this theory with God's purpose of grace, all principles and all works of man and of human systems are represented as called into judgment, and especially the principles and works peculiar to the two systems just mentioned. All of these works or principles are judged by the law and the testimony ; those not belonging to, or emanating from, the economy of grace, being condemned to destruction, as by the fire des-



tioned to *try every man's work of what sort it is*. The law, for example, requires the *love of God* in the heart, as the moving principle of action; and the economy of grace was formed to implant this *love of God*. Every principle in accordance with this requisition, and every work proceeding from it, will be found therefore in the *Book of Life*, as a component part of the plan of redemption; and every work, or device, or principle, not proceeding from this love, will be manifested to have no part in the volume of the divine purpose. Such must be the case with the systems *Death and Hell*, and with all their elements. As it was said of the Pharisees of old, they have not the love of God in them; they are therefore in this judgment condemned *in toto*, and accordingly share the fate of the accuser himself.

The last enemy that shall be destroyed, it is said 1 Cor. xv. 26, is *death*. To this stage of apocalyptic narration we have now arrived. *Death and hell*, as well as the legal adversary, are cast into the lake of fire. The power of Christ has been exhibited in this vision, until he is seen to have "brought all things under his feet." As the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, we have seen him prevailing to open the sealed book, the secret purpose of the Most High, (the mystery hid in God, Eph. iii. 9, Col. i. 26;) having redeemed his people by his own blood, and by the same blood overcoming the power of accusation even in the councils of heaven, (§ 284.) We have seen him, as the Word of God, victorious over all the pretensions of the earthly system,—manifesting the power of his name, and establishing the verity of the declaration that there is no other *name* given amongst men by which we can be saved than that of the King of kings; and we have seen him exalted on the throne of divine sovereignty, exercising the prerogative of judgment, and manifesting the subjection of all things to his will. We are now, accordingly, prepared to see him deliver up the kingdom unto the Father, that God may be manifested to be all in all, (1 Cor. xv. 28;) or, which is the same thing, we are now prepared to see the Lamb, the Word, and the Everlasting Father, identified as the one God over all; blessed for evermore, (Is. ix. 6, Rom. ix. 5.)

The earth and the heaven heretofore contemplated as existing having fled away, the judicial visitations of the *sixth seal* have terminated.

The millennial *rest* enjoyed by the souls beheaded for the witness of Jesus, accomplishes the promised judgment of the *fifth seal*.

*Death and Hell* are now deprived of the power given them over the fourth part of the earth at the opening of the *fourth seal*.

Babylon being utterly consumed—cast down never to rise again—the mercenary system is ended. The rider of the black horse, under the *third seal*, no more wields his balances, or makes a traffic of the means of eternal life.

The accuser (the dragon) with his vicegerent (the beast) and the prime

minister of that vicegerent (the false prophet) having gone into perdition, the rider of the *fiery-red horse*, under the *second seal*, deprived of his "great sword," has no longer the faculty of taking peace from the earth. The conflicting elements of self-righteousness having perished with their leaders, it is no longer given "that they should kill one another," as heretofore. The mountain of the Lord's house is now being established on the top of the mountains, (of the *new earth*.) "Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of God from Jerusalem." For this reason "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more," (Is. xi. 2-4.)

Of all the powers personified as combatants in the sixth chapter, the Rider of the white horse, seen at the opening of the *first seal*, alone remains unconquered—still conquering and to conquer; or, rather, he alone is victorious. His invincible bow, (§ 147,) wielded by his own right arm, (his righteousness,) "has gotten him the victory." The garment dipped in the blood of the Lamb is manifested to be the vesture of Jehovah of Hosts, (§ 432 ;) the exhibition of this truth, (enforced by the sword from the mouth of the Word,) overcoming the pretender and his forces, in the field of manifestation, as the power of the dragon and his angels had been previously overcome by Michael and his angels. The crown, the token and earnest of his success, first given to the conqueror, is now exchanged for a multitude of diadems; his power is unlimited; he has received the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. His dominion extends from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth, (Ps. lxii. 8 :) while, with the element of divine sovereignty, he rules the nations (the Gentile principles of the worldly system) as with a rod of iron.

All elements of opposition to man's redemption, and to the glory of the Saviour, having been thus overcome; or rather the manifestation of this triumph having been completed, it follows, as a matter of course, that an entire new state of things is to be exhibited; this new exhibition corresponding with the change in the position of the disciple spoken of 2 Cor. v. 17, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away, all things are become new." According to his advancement in faith the disciple sees himself in a new position. The reign of *self* within his own mind having been first terminated, he sees the enemies of his soul vanquished and overcome by the power of Christ: casting himself upon the righteousness of his Saviour, with him the old heaven and the old earth have passed away; he has now found a *resting place*, (Jer. l. 6,) and breathes a new atmosphere

## CHAPTER XXI.

THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH.—THE HOLY CITY,  
OR TABERNACLE OF GOD.—ALL THINGS NEW.

V. 1. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

Καὶ εἶδον οὐρανὸν καινὸν καὶ γῆν και-  
νήν· ὁ γὰρ πρῶτος οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ πρώτη  
γῆ ἀπῆλθον, καὶ ἡ θάλασσα οὐκ ἔστιν ἔτι.

§ 463. ‘AND I saw,’ &c.—The break occasioned by the division of chapters here is not to be noticed. The scene is a continuation of that described at the close of the last chapter. The white throne, and Him that sat upon it, is still in view;—we have seen the fate of one class of those brought before the great tribunal; we are now to witness that of an opposite class. The difference, however, does not seem to arise so much from the character of the individuals composing these classes, as from the circumstances under which they are judged. In order to change the sentence, the whole state of things is changed—every thing wears a new aspect—excepting only the one unchangeable Being, who himself is the author of the change, and who remains still seated on his throne, (v. 5.)

We are not to suppose an interval of time between the fleeing away of the old heaven and earth, and the appearance of the new. The change is instantaneous, as in the twinkling of an eye; the disciple is seen in a new position, and the whole scheme of divine government appears in a new light. It is sufficient here to refer to the definition already given of the terms *heaven* and *earth*. We repeat only, that we suppose *heaven* to represent a view of the principles of divine government; and the *earth* a view of man's position under that government. Both of these views are afforded by the written revelation contained in the sacred Scriptures; the old views being those derived from an ordinary or literal construction of that Revelation, and the new views those obtained from a spiritual construction of it. The old heaven represented the Deity dealing with man on the principles of strict justice only; the new heaven represents the divine government on the principle of *grace*. The old earth exhibited man's position *out of Christ*, dependent upon his own merits; the new earth represents his position *in Christ*. Both the new earth and the new heaven concur in repre-



senting the disciple as a *new creature in Christ*. The written revelation remains the same, but the construction put upon it differs ; as the apostle says, I saw heaven new and earth new ; the same things created over again, or made new ; that is, contemplated in a new light : a change apparently referred to, Matt. xix. 28, as the *regeneration* in which the Son of man sits on the throne of his glory.

One result of this change we have already seen to be the judgment of the systems *death* and *hell*, and the condemnation of their dead works. In the new state of things, except the declaration that "there shall be no more death," &c., (ver. 4,) they are not mentioned ; neither do we perceive any thing more said of the three other peculiar objects of divine indignation, the beast, the false prophet, and Satan ; they do not even come into remembrance. The development now making may be considered a consequence of the pouring out of the seventh vial of wrath, as well as of the sounding of the *last* trumpet ; but it is to be recollected that these vials were poured out upon the *old* earth, and not upon the new. The denunciation of the three woes was addressed to the inhabitants of the *old* earth, and it is to the old earth only that the seven vials were vials of wrath. In other words, a position out of Christ is obnoxious to all the elements of divine wrath ; in Christ, as we have already noticed in this connection, (§ 456,) old things have passed away, all things have become new.

'And there was no more *sea*.'—In the new exhibition of divine things, the symbol of vindictive justice is not called for, (§ 459.) The accuser having gone into perdition, the threatenings of judicial vengeance are no more heard ; upon the new earth there is no distress of nations with perplexity—the sea and the waves roaring. In this new position, men's hearts are no longer failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth. The powers of heaven indeed have been shaken, and the old heaven has passed away like a scroll, when it is rolled together ; but now the power of the Son of man is exhibited—the great power of him who could say to the stormy billow, "Peace; be still," and it obeyed him. Now, then, it is for the elements of the economy of grace to lift up their heads, for, analogous to the circumstances of the people of God, their redemption also draweth nigh ; the time has now come for a manifestation of truth ;—the old heaven and earth have passed away, but the words of him that is *faithful* and *true* cannot pass away, (Luke xxi. 25–33.)\*

\* We have already noticed a peculiarity in the new heavens and the new earth, spoken of 2 Peter iii. 13, that in them dwelleth a righteousness not to be found in their predecessors, (§ 456.) Connecting this explanation with the remainder of the passage in the same epistle, an apocalyptic construction may reasonably be put upon that description, also, of the change in contemplation, "the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat."

V. 2. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Καὶ τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν, Ἰερουσαλὴμ νέαν, εἶδον καταβαίνουσαν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἡτοιμασμένην ὡς νύμφην κεκοσμημένην τῷ ἄνδρὶ αὐτῆς.

§ 464. ‘And I John,’ &c.—The name *John* is not met with here in all editions of the Greek. The omission is not material, except that the formal introduction of the name appears to imply some peculiar discrimination not perhaps intended. Reading these two first verses in connection with the close of the last chapter, and in the Greek order, it will be perceived that all here described is supposed to take place contemporaneously; even the things seen are not so much different things as they are old things renovated, or made new—seen in a new light: “And if any one was not found in the book of life, he (or it) was cast into the lake of fire. And I saw heaven new and earth new, for the first heaven and the first earth *passed* away, (second aorist,) and the sea *is* no longer (present.) And the city the holy, Jerusalem new, I saw descending out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride decorated for her husband,” &c.

‘The holy city, new Jerusalem.’—This holy city, although not the same, may be said to occupy the same *site* as that once trodden under foot by the Gentiles, (Rev. xi. 2.) It must be also the *beloved* city mentioned in the preceding chapter as encompassed by the Gentiles or nations, (in jeopardy from the forces led on by the *accuser*;)—“the city of my God,” as it is called, Rev. iii. 12, and the city without the gates of which the wine-press was trodden, (§ 343.) This city has been mentioned but once

The apostle uses this prediction as an argument to influence those to whom his epistle was then addressed, as well as all coming after them. It could hardly be considered an argument, to state to them that some one or two thousand years after they had passed from this state of existence, the earth, with its surrounding atmosphere, was to be literally destroyed; but, in the sense in which we construe it here, it was an argument, because, in this sense, it was as immediately interesting to every disciple of the apostle’s time as it is to us of the present day, and as it must be to all that come after us.

At the time of writing the Epistle, too, there were supposed to be but four physical elements, fire, air, earth, and water; and to give his language the ordinary construction, would be to suppose the three last elements, air, earth, and water, melted by the first element. The *elements* alluded to by Peter, we apprehend to be the same as those spoken of by Paul, Gal. iv. 3: “Even so we, when we were children, [as to our understanding of revealed truth,] were in bondage under the *elements* of the world;” and ninth verse, “But now, after ye have known God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly *elements*, whereunto ye desire to be in bondage?” As if it were said, How is it that ye look back to the elements of self-justification, peculiar to the old heavens and the old earth, instead of looking forward to the new position of justification, through the imputed righteousness to be found in the new heaven and the new earth?

before (§ 100) in connection with the appellation now given to it, the *new Jerusalem*; and, with this exception, the present is the first passage in which that appellation has occurred in the Apocalypse.

We have already thrown out the suggestion that this city is a figure or symbol of the *economy of grace*, (§§ 100, 238,) in a certain sense denominated the *church*, (Eph. v. 32,) but not immediately the aggregate multitude of believers. The name Jerusalem, signifying *the vision of peace*, very happily illustrates what we understand by this apocalyptic city, comprehending as it does, a view of the whole scheme of redemption, by which peace or reconciliation between the sinner and his offended God is established. Such an economy or vision, although it does not represent the body of disciples themselves, represents that which constitutes them a body in the sight of God—that which identifies the multitude of the redeemed with the Redeemer; the economy of grace being the instrument in this work, (§ 466,) and Jerusalem (the vision of peace) the representation of this instrument or means.

The economy of grace itself has been always the same, but the vision by which it has been represented has varied. Jerusalem was literally destroyed and trodden under foot when the Jews were carried to Babylon, but its site remained; and upon the restoration, when the city was rebuilt, although in one sense it was a new city, it was in another sense Jerusalem new, or the old city renovated—the site giving to both cities the attribute of identity. So this economy itself, which is nothing less than the divine purpose of grace—unchangeable as the mind of God—is like “Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abideth forever.” The exhibition of this unchangeable purpose, however, as contemplated by man, like Jerusalem before and after the restoration, has a new and old appearance: the one as different from the other as a new city may be from an old one, although on the same site.

§ 465. ‘Coming down from God out of heaven.’—Comparing this description with Gal. iv. 22–27, we must be convinced that the *new Jerusalem* of John is the Jerusalem *which is above*,—*ἡ ἄνω Ἱερουσαλὴμ* of Paul: the latter speaking of the holy city as in heaven, not yet revealed, and the former as being revealed. We may safely, therefore, refer to Paul for an understanding of what is represented by this holy city; both apostles speaking by the inspiration of the same spirit.

“Tell me,” says Paul, “ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free woman. But he (who was) of the bond-woman was born after the flesh; but he of the free woman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this



Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not ; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not ; for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bond-woman and her son ; for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free," (the Jerusalem above.)

Here is something said to be *allegorized*, "Αἰνρά ἐστὶν ἀλληγορούμενα. The apostle evidently does not mean that this whole history is merely an instructive fable, according to the idea usually associated at the present day with the term *allegory*. His meaning very obviously is, that the facts here related have an allegorical purport—as we should say of the whole history of the Hebrew nation, including the present dispersed state of that people among all nations, that it is an allegory ; and we might apply the same term to the history of mankind, as contained in the whole book of Genesis, without intending to imply a disbelief in the *reality* of the facts narrated.

The apostle further declares these two women to be (to represent) two covenants or testaments : αὗται εἶσι δύο διαθήκαι. Not two assemblies of persons, but two testamentary arrangements, plans, or economies ; as the Greek term διαθήκαι properly signifies, (§ 264, note.) One of these women—the female slave Hagar—is put for the economy emanating from Mount Sinai, or the legal dispensation, the tendency of which is to create a position of bondage ; the children of the female slave, according to the law of slavery, being *slaves*, whatever may have been the condition of their fathers. Corresponding with this figure, those who are of the law are in a state of slavery : their only motive of action must be that of *fear*, as if driven by the whip of the task-master. On the principles of law, they can do nothing but what it is their duty to do, and punishment awaits the smallest act of disobedience ; to offend in one point, is to be guilty of all. Analogous with this the principles of the legal economy may be also spoken of as the children or offspring of bondage.\*

\* Children, as already noticed, are typically figures of merits or righteousnesses, (means of justification.) Corresponding with this, we take Isaac—the fruit of promise, as well as of the marriage covenant—to represent that righteousness which is the offspring of grace, or of the covenant of grace ; while Ishmael, whose hand was against every man, and every man's hand against him, represents pretensions to righteousness (works, the offspring of the law) interchangeably hostile to each other ;

But the bond-maid Hagar, according to Paul, not only represents the mountain in Arabia, but both Sinai and Agar are put for the city Jerusalem, as it was in the time of the apostles, (*τῇ νῦν Ἱερουσαλήμ*), in bondage to the Romans: calling herself free indeed, (John viii. 33,) but really in a state of abject servitude; *δουλεύει γὰρ μετὰ τῶν τέκνων αὐτῆς*, for she labours as a slave with her children. Jerusalem thus in bondage corresponds with what might be termed a view of the *economy of grace legalized*, or misrepresented as a legal dispensation. There are here, therefore, three several typical figures of the legal economy, Hagar, Mount Sinai, and Jerusalem, under a foreign yoke. The opposites of these are not so distinctly set forth, but we have the means of identifying them from other portions of Scripture.

That Sarah is put for the economy of *grace* is very plainly implied from the manner in which her opposite Hagar is spoken of; and that Mount Zion, or Sion, in a spiritual sense, (the heavenly Sion,) is an opposite of Sinai in the wilderness, as well as that the heavenly Jerusalem (the city of my God) is an opposite of the earthly Jerusalem, we gather from Heb. xii. 18, 22: "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched and that burned with fire," &c. . . . "But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem;" or, as the same apostle elsewhere expresses it, "Ye are not under the law but under grace," (Rom. vi. 14, 16.) Sarah, Mount Sion, and the heavenly Jerusalem, are thus opposites of Agar, Mount Sinai, and Jerusalem in bondage; that is, these

as those to whom it was given, under the Rider of the red horse, "that they should kill one another."

The child of bondage was born according to the flesh; that is, according to the common course of nature; representing the offspring of man's position by nature, as under the law, and labouring to justify himself by works of the law. The child of promise was born out of the course of nature, by an immediate exercise of divine power; born because promised, and promised as a matter of gift; representing the offspring of man's position by grace, which offspring is the imputed righteousness or merits of his Saviour.

The two children thus represent *primarily*, disciples themselves as under the law, and as under grace; *secondarily*, or apocalyptically, the righteousness of the law and the righteousness of faith: pretended merits arising from a pretended fulfilment of the law by the disciple, and imputed merits arising from a vicarious fulfilment of the law by the Redeemer. The first sense is that attached to the ordinary interpretation of the Scriptures, and corresponds with what Paul terms the *letter*, and with what we suppose to be understood in the apocalypse by a *mid-heaven* revelation; the last or spiritual interpretation corresponds with what Paul denominates *the Spirit*, and the view presented by the *third* heaven, and with what the Apocalypse ascribes to the appearance of the new heaven and the new earth, (that is, the heaven and the earth in their *third* sense.)

The difference will be perceived by carrying out the analogy: "Cast out the bond-woman and her son," it is said; "for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman." Adopting the ordinary sense alone, not only

are series of figures of two opposite covenants or testaments. Our conclusion is, therefore, that the holy, or new Jerusalem, or holy city mentioned in this verse of the Apocalypse, represents the new covenant, or testament of grace, and not the community of believers themselves, as might otherwise be supposed. To see this holy city coming down out of the new heaven from God, is equivalent to perceiving in the written revelation of the divine will, spiritually understood, this dispensation of grace in its proper light, free from the shackles of a legal or literal interpretation, and appearing, as it is, immediately the *gift* of God. This also may be considered a result of the entire new views incident to the passing away of the old heaven and earth, and of the coming in of the new, one exhibition being necessarily involved in the other.

§ 466. 'Prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.'—It is not yet stated expressly that this holy city is the bride; but we find it to be directly so implied in the ninth and tenth verses of the chapter. The truth is gradually developed. We first find, from a comparison of Scripture with Scripture, that the new Jerusalem is the mother of us all, (Gal. iv. 26,) and afterwards that she is identic with the bride; whence we draw the inference that the bride is *the mother of us all*. In other words, the covenant of grace, represented by the New Jerusalem, and by the bride, is the mother of us all; the redeemed of every sect and denomination, however they may nominally differ, becoming the children of God by virtue of this testamen-

the covenant itself is cast out, but all who have been labouring, under a misapprehension of their true position, to work out a righteousness of their own, are cast out with it; which strictly construed, according to the views we have presented of the mixed, as well as of the legal system, would leave scarcely an individual not cast out, even of those most anxious upon the subject of their eternal interests; but if we adopt the third sense as the enduring sense—that afforded by the new heaven—it is then the pretensions to merit under the legal covenant, and not the mistaken disciple, that are cast out or rejected—the error and not the errorist, that is the object of denunciation: a discrimination comprehended, we think, in Paul's declaration, that the letter (the ordinary sense) killeth, while the spirit or spiritual sense giveth life.

On the other hand it will be said, in the same sense, it is the imputed righteousness of Christ, and not the disciple himself that is the *heir* represented by the child of promise. And so we say it is. The imputed righteousness of Christ possesses or carries with it the title to eternal life and happiness: and it is by virtue of this imputed righteousness, that the disciple participates in these eternal benefits. Christ is the *heir*, and it is only by adoption in Christ that the disciple also becomes an heir. The merits of Christ are the means of justification, and it is only by a participation in these merits, that the disciple shares in this justification: Christ is the promised seed—the child of promise—the inheritor of all things. The disciple's hope is to be found *in Christ*, not having on his own righteousness, which is of the law, (the offspring of the covenant of bondage,) but having on the righteousness of God. As if the apostle had said, So then, brethren, *in Christ* and not in ourselves, we are children, not of the bond-woman, but of the free.



tary arrangement; while by a legal covenant they could only occupy the position of slaves.

The bride it appears is prepared by being *adorned*; not merely clothed, but decorated with ornaments—corresponding with the idea we have before suggested, that the occasion for this preparation is not the marriage itself, but the marriage feast, (§ 425,)—the exhibition or manifestation of the marriage, at which it was customary, with the Hebrews, for both of the parties to exhibit their best attire. As it is said, Is. lxi. 10, “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, *as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels.*” Of Jerusalem in her perverted state it was said, Ezek. xv. 14, 15, “And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty, for it was perfect through *my* comeliness which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God; but thou didst trust in *thine own* beauty, and played the harlot, because of thy renown.” We suppose the ornament of the bride descending out of heaven from God to be that of *his* comeliness—the beauty of *his* perfection. The covenant of grace is seen exhibiting that righteousness and that moral beauty which is the gift of God, conveyed by imputation, given, we may say, to the mother of us all, for the benefit of her children.

The economy of redemption, or the vision of it, in its pristine state, as it comes direct from God out of heaven, is adorned with the precious jewels of divine perfection, and with these only; as it was said by Jehovah of Jerusalem, in the passage just now quoted, “I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck; and I put a jewel in thy forehead, and ear-rings in thy ears, and a beautiful crown upon thy head.” But when this same covenant is misrepresented, when this vision of peace is perverted by misconstruction, when the ornaments of a Saviour’s merits are transmuted into pretensions of human merit, then may its gracious author say of it, as was said by the mouth of the prophet, “Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of *my* gold and of *my* silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself [idolrous objects of worship]; and tookest thy broidered garments and coveredst them: and thou hast set *mine* oil and *mine* incense before them,” &c., (Ezek. xvi. 11, 12, 17–19.)

The different aspects under which, as we apprehend, the same vision of peace is seen, will account for the various modes in which it is spoken of in the Psalms and prophets: “Do good in thy good pleasure,” says the Psalmist, “unto Zion, build thou the walls of Jerusalem,” make the provisions of thy grace known—exhibit in its true light the protection afforded by thine own economy of salvation. “If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave

to the roof of my mouth ; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." So, also, the prophet : " For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." No one can doubt which vision of peace is here alluded to. The righteousness spoken of must be the *imputed* righteousness of Jehovah, and the salvation that of *grace*.

On the other hand, when it is said, " Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid waste," (Is. lxiv. 10, 11 ;) " I will make Jerusalem heaps, and a den of dragons," (Jer. ix. 11 ;) the resort of accusers—a fate similar to that of Babylon ;—" I will mar the great pride of Judah and Jerusalem," (Jer. xiii. 9 ;) " I will make void the counsel of Jerusalem," (Jer. xix. 7 ;) " Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations," &c. ; there can be no doubt that, in all these passages, the *old* Jerusalem,—the perverted vision of peace—is the subject of contemplation and reproach.

§ 467. But again, we are equally certain that in the following passages, the spirit of prophecy had in view the brighter day, with the sight of which we are now favoured in the Apocalypse. Is. lii. 1, 2 : " Awake, awake ; put on thy strength, O Zion ; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city ! . . . Shake thyself from the dust, (the perversion of earthly, carnal interpretations ;) arise, sit down, O Jerusalem : loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, (the yoke of legal construction,) O captive daughter of Zion." " Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice ; with the voice together shall they sing ; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem : for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all nations ; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God," (Is. lii. 8–10.) " Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her : rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her. . . . As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you ; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem," (Is. lxvi. 10, 13.) " For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth : and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create ; for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people : and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying," (Is. lxvi. 17–19.) " For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain," (Is. lxvi. 22.)

The watchmen shall see *eye to eye* when the interpreters of the written word possess that spiritual understanding, *σύνεσις πνεύματική*, (Col. i. 9,) which will enable them to discern and to set forth clearly the whole truth of the gospel; when there is a *concurrence* of the mental vision with the spiritual purport of the Scriptures; when the right arm of divine righteousness is seen to be virtually the instrument of upholding and saving the sinner; and when this *arm*, as set forth in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, is revealed, in the spirit as well as in the letter. When such an exhibition shall take place, the economy of grace (the vision of peace) must in effect appear coming immediately from God, adorned with the distinguishing characteristics of his atoning sacrifice, (the pearl of great price,) the clothing of his perfect righteousness, and his precious name, as a seal or jewel in the forehead. So the seed and the name of the covenant of grace will *remain* when these are perceived to be identic with the merits of Christ,—the promised seed,—and with the name *Jehovah our righteousness*, by which it was predicted he should be called.

Vs. 3, 4. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God (is) with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, (and be) their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things have passed away.

καὶ ἤκουσα φωνῆς μεγάλης ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ λεγούσης· ἰδοὺ, ἡ σκηνὴ τοῦ θεοῦ μετὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ σκηνώσει μετ' αὐτῶν, καὶ αὐτοὶ λαοὶ αὐτοῦ ἔσονται, καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ θεὸς μετ' αὐτῶν ἔσται, θεὸς αὐτῶν· καὶ ἐξαλείψει ὁ θεὸς πᾶν δάκρυον ἀπὸ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν, καὶ ὁ θάνατος οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι, οὔτε πένθος οὔτε κλαυγὴ οὔτε πόνος οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι· οὔτε τὰ πρῶτα ἀπῆλθον.

§ 468. ‘And I heard a great voice,’ &c.—This voice is out of the new heaven, for the old had passed away: a great voice, a powerful development from the new view of divine revelation.

‘Behold, the tabernacle of God,’ &c.—When the apostle Peter in vision saw a certain vessel as a great sheet let down from heaven, there came a voice, saying, Rise, Peter, kill and eat. The voice referred to the vessel let down; so we suppose here, the new Jerusalem is seen coming down from heaven, and at the same moment a voice is heard, saying, *Behold, the tabernacle*, &c. God is now about to dwell with his people: behold the tabernacle he has prepared for that purpose—the *New Jerusalem*. The covenant of grace, sometimes spoken of as the holy city, is the tabernacle, tent, or shelter, which God has provided for his people; the tent which he pitches *over them*, as we have formerly contemplated the figure, (§ 181;) a figure equivalent to that of the overshadowing of wings, employed Ps. xvii. 8, xxxvi. 7, and elsewhere. The tabernacle of God, and the city of God, (the new Jerusalem adorned as a bride,) are identic; different figures of the same means of redemption, of the same testamentary



arrangement, (*διαθήκη*), by which the righteousness of God is (in Christ) made to the disciple a shelter from the wrath to come. To see this plan of redemption fully developed, is, accordingly, to see the tabernacle of God with men.

‘And he will dwell with them,’ &c. ; or, as the Greek *σκηνοῦσα* strictly signifies, He shall tabernacle or pitch his tent with them.—The figure is essentially Arabian ; as if a tribe of wandering Arabs, without a leader and without a protector, were exposed to some imminent danger, and on this account, just at the moment when they were about being scattered by flying before their enemies, a powerful neighbouring chief were to adopt their cause as his own, to identify himself with them, and as a pledge of his good faith and determination to protect them, to pitch his tent among them ; he becoming their leader, and they his subjects. So, in a spiritual sense, when the tabernacle of God—the economy of grace—is revealed, he will be seen to have come forth for the protection of his people, *making their cause his own*, pitching his tent amongst them, and identifying himself with them—He as their God and they as his people.

This identity, as we conceive, is the prominent idea to be associated with the description ; corresponding with the petition of the Son of God himself, (John xvii. 21, 23,) “That they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.” . . . . “I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.” Not that the use of the figure here militates with that referred to Rev. vii. 15, but that different features of the same arrangement are indicated by the changes of expression. The tent pitched *over* the objects of protection directs our attention to the shelter of divine righteousness ; while the tent pitched *among* or *with* the same objects, points to the feature of *identity* by adoption, (Gal. iv. 4, 5, and Eph. iv. 5, 6.) So the advantages of the disciple’s *position* by adoption are illustrated by two different figures, Ps. xv. 1 : “Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle ? who shall dwell in thy holy hill ?” The position on the hill is equivalent, as a protection, to the shelter of the tabernacle. So we find likewise, by Ps. xxvii. 5, the position upon a rock, and the secrecy of the inmost recess of a tabernacle, to be illustrations of the same state of security : “In the time of trouble, (when the requisitions of divine justice call for the punishment of the sinner,) he (God) shall hide me in his pavilion : in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me, he shall set me up upon a rock.”

This tabernacle is now said to be “with *men* ;” that is, with the men of the new earth, or with men in the new state of things : not the inhabitants of the first earth, (Rev. viii. 13,) nor the men not having the seal of God in their foreheads, (Rev. ix. 4,) nor those that blasphemed God on account of the hail, (Rev. xvi. 21,) but apparently a class similar to those spoken

of, Rev. vii. 14–17, who had washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, of whom it was also said, “He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them,” &c., (§§ 180–184;) this purification in the blood of the Lamb being equivalent to the change of position from the old to the new state of things. We suppose the epoch of the two representations to be the same: the announcement in the first four verses of this chapter being a declaration of the fulfilment of what is predicted in the three last verses of the seventh chapter.

As the development of the sixth seal extends to the coming of the great day of wrath, corresponding as we suppose with the scene of judgment under the seventh vial in the last chapter; so we may consider the action of the choruses *in heaven*, described in the seventh chapter, to correspond with the gratulatory announcement of the *great voice out of heaven* in this chapter;—the multitude which no man could number, standing before the throne, Rev. vii. 9, being identic with the *men* of the new heaven and new earth; or the first standing before the throne may apply to principles, and the last (*men* of the new earth) to those benefited by these principles. It may not be intended, however, that these terms, *multitude* and *men*, should be so strictly construed; the narrations, taken in the abstract, illustrating a *state of things*, or certain views of a state of things. The former things exhibited only views of judicial wrath, the new things exhibit those of mercy.

As we have before observed, in the description of the judicial retribution given at the close of the last chapter, the fate of only one class of objects is there set forth—those not written in the book of life. The present chapter unfolds the condition of an opposite class; the individuals of this class, however, are not represented as objects of meritorious reward. In order to bring about their different treatment, the circumstances of the case are entirely changed: a new heaven and a new earth are indispensable; former things must pass away, and all things must become new. As those escaping the lake of fire are not said to escape by virtue of their works, but as it is implied by the simple fact of their being found in the book of life; so those enjoying the privileges of the new Jerusalem, owe this enjoyment, not to their works, but to the extraordinary change of position with which they are favoured.

All things, it is said, are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do, (Heb. iv. 13;) in whose sight even the heavens are not clean, (Job xiv. 15;) and who is declared also to be of purer eyes than to behold evil, or to look upon iniquity, Heb. i. 13; consequently, the only mode in which any person or thing can become an object of divine favour, must be by substitution of the economy of grace for that of judgment.

§ 469. ‘And they shall be,’ &c.; or, the people themselves shall be

his, and he the God with them shall be—the God of them, or their God ;—corresponding with the distinction we have drawn between the actual service and worship of God, in which (taking the *motive* of conduct into view) He is considered the efficient cause of salvation, and consequently in effect *God* ; and a pretended worship of him, in which *self* or some other object is contemplated as the source of eternal life, making that object *in effect* to appear to be the true God.\*

‘ And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes,’ &c.—The promises of this verse correspond very nearly with those given concerning the multitude clothed in white, of which we have already treated, (§§ 180–184 ;) the wiping away of all tears, comprehending in fact the assurance that there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying. The principal difference in the passage appears to be, in the reason assigned for this favourable change in the circumstances of those affected by it.

‘ For [because] the former things have passed away.’—The harlot, and the beast, and the false prophet, and the accuser, and death, and hell, and the first heaven, and the first earth, and the sea, have passed away ; therefore, there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, nor any more pain ; consequently, no tears—they are wiped away by the removal of their exciting cause. Death we considered a state obnoxious to condemnation. If this state does not exist, the condemnation does not follow ; where there is no death, there is no hell ; the expression here, therefore, is equivalent to the declaration that there shall be no more *death and hell*. The accuser is gone ; the sea, the element of wrath, is gone ; and the whole position of man is changed ; he is now contemplated *in Christ*, and there is “ no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,” or that are “ found in him.”

Godly sorrow worketh repentance unto life ; but those in Christ, enjoying the new aspect of things, are here supposed to have passed the stage of repentance—the vestibule of faith ; for even Christ, in the days of his flesh, offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, (Heb. v. 7 ;) but being now glorified, and on the right hand of God, former things with him also have passed away. So the apostle urges the disciples to leave the elementary principles of the doctrine of Christ, and to go on, as we apprehend the expression, to more finished views of faith—views enabling the believer to perceive himself to be *with Christ* justified in the Spirit, and raised from a position of death to a position of life.

\* The words ‘ *is* ’ and ‘ *and he* ’ italicised in the first clause of this verse of our common version, are gratuitously supplied ; the reading would be better without them. Behold, the tabernacle of God with men ;—with *is*, the thing spoken of appears to have just taken place ; without it, the inference is that the tabernacle was before with men, but now they are called to look upon it, or to behold it—now, the veil is drawn aside, the mystery hid from the beginning is revealed.



Having been brought by repentance to a conviction of his sins, and to an entire casting of himself upon Christ for salvation, the disciple has reaped the fruit of godly sorrow ; he has attained the end designed by that discipline. He now rejoices in Christ, having no merit of his own, (Phil. iii. 3.) So Paul's *tears* were wiped away ; when labouring under a sense of his unworthiness from some besetting sin, he was assured that the *grace* of God was sufficient for his salvation ; the strength or power of Jehovah's imputed righteousness being manifested by the weakness of those in whose behalf it is interposed. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin ; if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us ; but if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins, (1 John i. 7, ii. 2.) Here is the wiping away of all tears, the cause of sorrow and crying is removed. To him whose advance in faith is sufficient to perceive this, former things have passed away, and a new heaven and a new earth appear.

A conviction of sin must necessarily be accompanied by sorrow ; but if it lead to a reliance upon the free, unmerited salvation of God, wrought out in Christ, it becomes a cause of rejoicing and of praise. How else could we unite with the apostle in the ascription of praise and adoration offered in the commencement of this book, Rev. i. 5, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." Nor is it to be supposed that we shall forget this cause of praise in a future state. Though God blot out our transgressions from the book of his remembrance, or no more remember them *against* us, the redeemed sinner cannot forget his former tribulation, without forgetting also the obligations of gratitude under which he has been placed.

"I will bless the Lord at all times," says David, "his praise shall be continually in my mouth ;" and this for the reason given : "I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears." "I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplication. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon the Lord as long as I live. The sorrows of *death* compassed me, and the pains of *hell* got hold upon me. I found trouble and sorrow, then called I upon the name of the Lord. O Lord, I beseech thee deliver my *soul*. Gracious is the Lord and righteous, yea, our God is merciful. The Lord preserveth the simple : I was brought low, and he helped me. Return unto thy *rest*, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee, *for thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling,*" (Ps. cxvi. 1-8.) Who can say that David did not enjoy, in spirit, an antepast at least of the new heaven and of the new earth.

‘Neither shall there be any more pain.’—No more *toil*, painful labour, (*πόρος*.) The new position is a state of *rest*—the opposite of the position of the subjects of the beast, on the pouring out of the fifth vial, (Rev. xvi. 10,) when they gnawed their tongues for pain, (§ 363.) “For we know (says Paul, Rom. viii. 22–25) that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption—the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope. But hope that is seen, is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.” In the views afforded by the new heavens and the new earth—the holy city and tabernacle of God—we have an exhibition of that which Paul waited for; a position of *rest*—a position termed by David the *rest of his soul*—a position of faith in which there is no anguish of labour, in going about to establish a righteousness of one’s own. To these views of Christian *rest* the apostle Peter appears to allude as the *end of faith*, in speaking of the *inheritance* “reserved in heaven,” “ready to be revealed in the last time,” (1 Peter i. 3–10.) A similar allusion may be found in the prediction Is. xxxv. 10: “And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

V. 5. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write; for these words are true and faithful.

Καὶ εἶπεν ὁ καθήμενος ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου· ἰδοὺ, καινὰ πάντα ποιῶ. καὶ λέγει· γράψον· ὅτι οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι πιστοὶ καὶ ἀληθινοὶ εἰσι.

§ 470. ‘And he that sat upon the throne,’ &c.—This clause reminds us that the present exhibition is part of the same as that described in the latter part of the preceding chapter; the throne spoken of here is the “great white throne,” and the occupant of the throne now speaking is He from whose face the heaven and earth fled away. It is not yet said expressly who this exalted Being is, although from all the circumstances of the representation, we have inferred and still infer that it is Jesus Christ himself, in his glorified state; and we have now an additional reason for this inference, afforded by the declaration here made.

‘Behold, *I* make all things new.’—The substitution of the new heavens and the new earth for the old had been previously described, and the declaration has already been uttered that the former things are passed away. The further development is now made as to the author of this change. The emphasis in reading the text is to be laid upon the pronoun *I*. It is Jesus who makes all things new. Christ, as the Lord our righteousness, virtually

makes all things new. By this manifestation of himself, he virtually substitutes a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth; as, by the substitution of himself for the disciple, he virtually makes of that disciple a new creature—causing, as it is said 2 Cor. v. 17, old things to pass away and all things to become new—the *new creature* spoken of Gal. vi. 15: “In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new *creature*,” *καὶνὴ κτίσις*, (*creatio, fabricatio. Sumitur proprie pro productione rerum ex nihilo: Suiceri Lex.;*)—this term, new creation *properly signifying the production of things out of nothing*—something more than merely the *re-formation* of an old thing. The disciple in Christ, in the sight of God is accounted a new being, formed of the righteousness and merits of his Saviour: “For he (Christ) is our peace, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, (the law of commandments in ordinances,) to make in himself of twain one new man.”

Here we have a reason for the fleeing away of the first heaven and earth from the face of him who sat upon the throne. In the nature of the case, no sooner is he seen, who makes all things new by the manifestation of himself on the white throne, as Jehovah our righteousness, than old views of things vanish; they cannot sustain themselves against such an exhibition. A new economy appears in the place of the old; gospel principles in the place of legal principles; elements of redemption in the place of elements of condemnation; the gift or grace of eternal life in place of the wages of sin.

Jesus, the Saviour, Mediator, and Redeemer, makes all things new; that is, all things or principles pertaining to the development of the doctrine of eternal life, the mystery of godliness; all things pertaining to a just knowledge of his own works and character;—the secular or ecclesiastical affairs of the world, in the ordinary sense, forming no part of the subject here under consideration.

The overshadowing of the mercy-seat (Heb. ix. 5) is now removed; the mystery which angels desired to look into, is laid open: even that *about which it was not the time to speak particularly*, (*περὶ ὧν οὐκ ἔστι νῦν λέγειν κατὰ μέρος*;) when Paul wrote his epistle to the Hebrews, will be found in *all its parts* in this revelation; this *unveiling* of Christ being itself in effect the making of all things new. The purpose of God must be unchangeable—truth is unchangeable—but the mode in which this purpose and this truth is exhibited may be changed; a new view may be given of it: and such a *new creation* we take to be the gist and purport of the whole book of the Apocalypse. For this reason, more particularly, the declaration is here made by him who sat on the throne—“Behold, *I* make all things new.”

§ 471. ‘And he said unto me, Write; for these words are true and faithful.’—We met with a direction similar to this Rev. xix. 9, and a like rea-



son given for it. The remarks there made (§ 337) will equally apply here. The sayings or words of God cannot be more true in one portion of the sacred writings than in another, as all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, (2 Tim. iii. 16.) The declaration has just been uttered, that all things were made new. The question occurs, What things? The answer is, these true and faithful words—not physical or natural things, but things belonging to the new heaven and the new earth; made new by being changed from old to new: that is, by being seen in a true light. The sayings or words of God are those handed down to us in the Scriptures. They are unchangeable in themselves, but they are made new by a new construction—the interpretation afforded by a correct spiritual understanding.

The term rendered *words* here, and *sayings* on the former occasion, is the plural of *ὁ λόγος*, *the word*, which when said to be that of the Deity we have supposed to express the divine purpose. In the plural, therefore, the *words* of God must signify the purposes of God; or, as we may say, the *expressed* purposes of God—the words or sayings of divine revelation. They are not here said to be the words *of God*, because they are uttered by the Deity himself—by Him who sat on the throne—the Author of the change. The declaration, when before made, was uttered by an angel, or messenger, the fellow-servant of the apostle, which rendered the explanation necessary, that the sayings in question were those of God. The *words* must be the same in both cases. We think they represent the same elements of truth as those companions of the Lamb said to be “called, chosen and faithful,” (worthy of faith and confidence,) engaged with their leader in overcoming the ten horns or kings, (§ 323.)

The apostle is instructed to write these things or words made new, because they are thenceforth to remain unchangeable and unchanged—opposites of that *which decayeth and waxeth old*, referred to Heb. viii. 13; and opposites of the things spoken by the seven thunders which were not to be written, (§ 229.) Moses indeed was also directed to write, (Deut. xxvii. 3,) and the moral law in its own nature, as we have before remarked, (§ 323,) must always remain the same—what is displeasing to God now, cannot be pleasing to him at a future period. To love God with all the heart, and with all the mind, and with all the strength, must be as much the rule of conduct for eternity as for time. There can be no eternal happiness without it; and this first and great rule adhered to, a compliance with every other like rule must be involved in it. It is not the law, but the disciple's position under the law, that is changed. The moral law itself can be no otherwise truly represented than as it is. But the new state of things shows a *new way* in which “every jot and tittle” of the requisitions of this law are fulfilled. The old way is changed, but the new is to remain for ever the same. As it is said, Heb. x. 19–23, “Having therefore, brethren, bold-

ness to enter into the holiest, by the blood (the atonement) of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh, (his righteousness,) and having an high priest over the house of God, (a *virtual* mediator, *virtually* interceding by the continual offering of his propitiatory merit,) let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith,\* having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, (relieved from the consciousness of guilt by faith in the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus,) and our bodies washed in pure water, (our whole being cleansed in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness,) let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is *faithful* that promised." Such are the true and faithful sayings of God, and such are the elements of the new heavens and of the new earth.

Vs. 6-8. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Καὶ εἶπέν μοι· γέγονε. ἐγὼ εἰμι τὸ Α καὶ τὸ Ω, ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος. ἐγὼ τῷ διψῶντι δώσω ἐκ τῆς πηγῆς τοῦ ὕδατος τῆς ζωῆς δωρεάν· ὁ νικῶν κληρονομήσει ταῦτα, καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτῷ θεός, καὶ αὐτὸς ἔσται μοι υἱός. Τοῖς δὲ δειλοῖς καὶ ἀπίστοις, καὶ ἐβδελυγμένοις καὶ φονεῦσι, καὶ πόρνοις καὶ φαρμακοῖς, καὶ εἰδωλολάτραις καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ψευδέσι, τὸ μέρος αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ λίμνῃ τῇ καιομένῃ πυρὶ καὶ θείῳ, ὃ ἐστὶν ὁ θάνατος ὁ δεύτερος.

§ 472. 'And he said unto me, It is done.'—A declaration similar to

\* The boldness, in full assurance of faith, here spoken of, may be considered a peculiar characteristic of the new creation; and may be illustrated by a remarkable difference between the custom of Christians in uncovering the head on entering a place of worship, and that of men of all other religions in covering their heads on the like occasion. We are apt to suppose our custom to have originated from the design of testifying a sentiment of reverence or humiliation; but that such is not its origin, may be shown from 1 Cor. xi. 1-7; as well as from the indisputable fact, that from the earliest times, prior to the coming in of the Christian dispensation, such a sentiment of veneration was uniformly expressed not by uncovering but by covering or veiling the head; or by making bare the feet and not the head, (Ex. iii. 5; 2 Sam. xv. 30.) We find even at the present day the Jew, the Mahometan, the worshipper of the sun, and the idolater, scrupulously covering their heads. The Christian only comes *boldly* to the throne of grace; not, however, in a presumptuous dependence upon his own merits, or as coming in his own name, but as depending upon the merits, and coming *in the name* of his divine Redeemer; *in Christ*, and *in him* alone, being warranted to assume this boldness.

The woman, indeed, in the Christian church, continues to cover her head, or to veil; because her head, as the apostle says, is the man; but the male disciple worships uncovered, because his head is Christ;—the condition of the one representing a position out of Christ, that of the other corresponding with a position in Christ. To be out of Christ, as in the state of former things, is to require a covering or shelter; to be *in Christ*, is to have all the covering required.

this was pronounced by a voice out of the temple from the throne, Rev. xvi. 17, immediately on the pouring out of the seventh vial, (§ 370.) Whatever may be the precise meaning of the word *ἔρχομαι*, its employment here, as before, appears to announce a crisis, and perhaps may be intended to point out a parity of the stages of revelation—the coincidence of the two developments: the pouring out of the seventh vial, and the consequent fleeing away of islands and mountains, being figurative of the same development as that here represented by the fleeing away of the heaven and the earth, or the making of all things new. Thus in the general tissue of revelation afforded by the opening of the sealed book, the results of the opening of the sixth seal, of the effusion of the seventh vial, and of the appearance of the great white throne, constitute three different representations of the same change; while we have, interwoven with the thread of the same narrative, the episodic accounts of the two witnesses, of the war in heaven, and persecution of the woman; of the beast and false prophet, with their opposite, the Word; and of the harlot, or commercial city, and of her opposite, the bride, or holy city: each contributing their respective illustrations to the whole revelation—different figures pointing to different features, and sometimes to the same features of the truth or error to be exhibited; every series of figures furnishing different degrees of development, but without any reference to succession in the order of time.

‘I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.’—At the commencement of this revelation, (Chap. i. 8,) the divine Being assuming this title declares himself also expressly as the *Almighty*; while in the eleventh verse, taking the context into view, it must be evident that the same appellation is attributed to the one like unto the Son of man in the midst of the seven candlesticks. We have now, therefore, the announcement that he who sat upon the white throne is the **WORD** made flesh, like unto the Son of man; and, at the same time, that he is the *Almighty*. As the *Almighty*, the Supreme Being must be without beginning of days or end of years; but, as the Redeemer, he is the beginning and the ending—the Alpha and Omega of the whole work of salvation, (§ 22.) The Word—the Conqueror of the beast—is now identified with the Father *Almighty*; and we have already seen that this Word is no other than he who trod the wine-press alone,—the Lamb, by whose blood the accuser was overcome.

When the mysteries of redemption are fully developed, the manifestation of God in Christ will be exhibited to have been something assumed for a temporary purpose, in order to bring the part taken by the Godhead in this wonderful work within the comprehension of man. Eventually it must appear that God and Christ are one and the same being; that God himself is the Redeemer and Saviour; that the language of the Psalmist, “Cast thy



burden upon the Lord," and that of Jesus, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden," constitute the same gospel invitation; that the burden of iniquity, of which David speaks as too heavy for him to bear, is the same kind of burden as that described by Paul as so much a subject of lamentation, (2 Cor. v. 2-4;) and that the righteousness of Christ spoken of by the apostle (1 Cor. i. 30) is identic with the righteousness of God spoken of by the prophet, (Is. xli. 10,)—the Deity veiling himself for a season in the person of his Son, or under the character of his *Sonship*, that he may bring the mystery of that sovereign grace in which mercy and justice are reconciled, within the limited comprehension of finite beings. When the *end comes*, (1 Cor. xv. 24,) the veil concealing this divinity from mortal eyes is withdrawn, and the benefactor, the Redeemer, exhibits himself to the astonished recipient of his favour as the Sovereign God, the Lord of hosts, (Is. liv. 5.)

§ 473. 'I will give to him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life *freely*.'—That is, not merely abundantly but *gratis*, without money and without price, (Is. lv. 1.) And this supply not to be drawn from the fountains of the earth, the third of which became blood, (Rev. viii. 10,) nor from the broken cisterns alluded to by the prophet, (Jer. ii. 13,) but from the fountain coming forth from the house of the Lord, (Joel iii. 18)—the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, (Zech. xiii. 1)—a fountain opened—revealed, manifested—for the house of David, the household of faith, and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the beneficiaries of the economy of grace: "For in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert, and the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water," (Is. xxxv. 6, 7.) Where by nature there are no means of atonement, such means will (in this new state of things) be provided by grace. As it is also said, (Is. xliii. 18-20,) "Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing: now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls, [accusatory and unclean principles;] because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert." "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground."

. . . "I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God," (Is. xliv. 3, 6.) "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Jacob will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness and the dry land springs of water," (Is. xli. 17, 18.) So John vii. 37, 38: "In that day, [the great day of the feast,] Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let

him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water;" and John iv.14, "Who-soever drinketh of the water that I shall give, shall never thirst," (§ 182.)

Keeping in view the cleansing quality of the element of water, an element otherwise also so indispensable to animal and even to vegetable life, and comparing these characteristics with the sinner's need of purification from guilt, by some adequate atonement, we cannot but see in these passages a uniform allusion to the propitiation of Christ. To be without this means of ablution, and of eternal life, is to be in danger of perishing as in a wilderness or desert "where no water is," (Ps. lxiii. 1.) To be sensible of this danger, is to thirst; to participate in the atonement of Christ, must be to partake, in fact, of the fountain of living water; to rely as a matter of faith on this propitiatory provision, is to come unto Christ to drink, to wash, and to be clean; and to abound in faith in this particular, is to see Christ as he here reveals himself, inviting and leading the disciple to the fountain of the water of life; having, as it were, *by these views of faith*, a reservoir within one's self, to which recourse may be had in every moment of discouragement.

The prominent feature of development to be attended to in this passage of the Apocalypse is, that it is he who *sits upon the throne*, that gives of this fountain of life freely, gratuitously, without any claim of merit on the part of the recipient. The supply, as well as the promise, is a matter of *grace*, and this of sovereign grace; and whether the invitation, the promise, or the supply, come from Jesus, from the Lamb slain, or from Jehovah, the source is equally *sovereign*—all coming from Him who sits upon the throne.

§ 474. 'He that overcometh shall inherit all things;' or, *these things*, as our edition of the Greek, with some others, has it.—If we ask, What things? the answer is, These *new* things just spoken of—things pertaining to the economy of redemption—all things of the new heaven and the new earth; these all are to be possessed by the right of inheritance: *vincens jure hereditario possidebit hæc*, (G. & L.) The inheritance is a *free gift* on the part of the testator; but the gift having been made, the heir maintains possession as against other claimants by *right*. The inheritance itself we suppose to be the merits or righteousness of Christ; the figure of a bequest by testament being an equivalent to what is elsewhere spoken of as an act of *imputation*. Apocalyptically, however, we have supposed this appellation, *the overcoming*, *ó nuzōr*, (he that overcometh,) to apply to a principle: the principle, for example, of sovereign grace; that is, *of imputed righteousness* emanating from sovereign grace, which may be said to overcome all other principles, or all principles opposed to the salvation of the sinner. It is in fact the principle of substitution, or of vicarious sacri-

fice, represented and carried out in Jesus Christ ; the disciple having the benefit of the triumph by entering into the new position created by it—the new state of things resulting from the victory.

The several extraordinary promises made to this overcoming principle in the introductory epistles of the book, have been already commented upon, (§§ 46, 56, 65, 80, 86, 96, 111, 113 :)—participation in the tree of life ; exemption from the power of the second death ; participation of the hidden manna ; power over the nations ; clothing in white raiment ; the position of a pillar bearing a certain name in the temple of God ; and a position with Christ on his throne. These promises, which we have shown to be apocalyptically applicable to a principle rather than to a *human being*, may be considered parts of the one promise here given, that of the inheritance of all things. From the fulness of the former assurances, the present would appear redundant, were it not for the peculiar form of the annunciation ; this being the only passage in which the figure of *inheriting*, or of an *inheritance*, *κληρονομέω*, *κληρονομία*, is employed in the Apocalypse. The several advantages before promised as gifts, are here set forth as secured by *testamentary* arrangement ; this peculiarity directing our attention to the *testament* (*Διαθήκη*) or *will* itself, for further information. This instrument, in the present case, must be the *new* testament ; because the *last* will of a testator always takes precedence over every other—the last rendering all preceding it null and void.

Of Jesus Christ himself it is said, (Heb. i. 4,) that he is “made so much better than the angels, as he hath by *inheritance* obtained a more excellent name than they.” The disciple obtains his inheritance by adoption in Christ, (Eph. i. 5 and 11 ;) Christ being in the first instance the heir or inheritor of all things, (Heb. i. 2,) and the disciple an heir *through Christ* ; for which cause, he (Christ) is called the Mediator of the New Testament, (Heb. ix. 15 ;) corresponding with our suggestion, that in point of fact Christ only can be said to have overcome, or to conquer, or to have conquered ; as even in the *war* in heaven, *the brethren* overcame the accuser only by the blood of the Lamb, and through the word of his testimony. The design of the Apocalypse cannot be to glorify, or to manifest the glory of the disciple ; it must be to set forth the true character and work of Christ, and to manifest the glory to which *he* is entitled. Accordingly, all that is promised to *the overcoming* may be predicated of Christ ; and if applied to any other, it must be, as we apprehend, to some overcoming principle of which Christ is the personification, or which may be identified with him.

The apostle says, (1 John v. 4 and 5,) “this is the victory that overcometh the world, *our faith*.” But the victory is not the victor, it is a result of the efforts of the conqueror ; and Jesus Christ himself tells his



disciples (John xvi. 33) to be of good cheer, because *he* has overcome the world, (ἐγὼ νενίκηκα τὸν κόσμον.) So he is represented in this book of Revelation to be the only final conqueror or overcomer; and, consequently, he must be the only heir of all things in his own right. As the Lion of the tribe of Judah, he *overcame* (ἐνίκησεν) to open the book; as the Rider of the white horse, he went forth *overcoming* and *to overcome*, νικῶν, καὶ ἵνα νικήσῃ; and as the Lamb, he overcame the ten horns or ten kings. On the other hand, the *beast* is said to have overcome the two witnesses (Rev. xi. 7) and the saints, (Rev. xiii. 7;) but the beast himself is *finally* overcome by the Word of God; and the dragon, from whom the beast derived his power, was overcome in heaven, through the instrumentality of the brethren, by the blood of the Lamb.

There is but one exception to this general observation, and that is the case of those seen on the sea of glass, who had *overcome* (τοὺς νικῶντας)\* the beast, and his image, and his mark, and the number of his name; (Rev. xv. 2.) It is not said how these overcame, but the inference seems to be unavoidable, that they obtained their victory in a way similar to that by which the brethren overcame the accuser; that is, by the blood of the Lamb, or, by the exhibition of that blood, as the Word overcame the beast by virtue of the vesture dipped in blood. They sang the song of Moses and of the Lamb—indicating a victory obtained through the law and the gospel. The contest with the beast being a contest of manifestation, the victory of these elements is apparently the same as that obtained by the *armies of heaven* under conduct of the Word of God. These elements, however, overcame only the beast and his forces; the blood of the Lamb overcame the dragon, and fire from heaven the nations of the earth, under conduct of Satan.

§ 475. ‘And I will be his God, and he shall be my son.’—At the close of the introductory addresses to the churches, (Rev. iii. 21,) it is said, Christ himself being the speaker, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”† This is a promise of identity by substitution; a throne being a seat, (§ 118.) To sit in one’s seat, is to sit in one’s place; and to sit in the place of another, is to be substituted for that other.

The whole tenor of the Apocalypse has shown us in what manner Christ by overcoming has obtained the inheritance of all things; and we might confine the declaration before us to Him alone. He has overcome. He is consequently heir of all things, as just noticed; and by the clause of

\* The Greek verb, it will be perceived, is the same in all these instances.

† The Tyndale and Cranmer versions employ the word *seat* here, instead of throne.

the verse now under consideration, he is "declared to be the Son of God with power," (Rom. i. 4.) He has thus revealed to us in what manner, and by virtue of what victory, he is set down with his Father on his throne. He has unveiled himself as the Lamb, as the Word, and as the Son of God on the right hand of the Father.

We now go back to the promise of Jesus, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my seat," that is, to occupy my place as the Son of God, and to be substituted for me—to be manifested as identic with me. Corresponding with what we have before said of the application of the promises to *the overcoming* to a *principle*, we make the same application here. The principle of righteousness imputed by sovereign grace to the sinner, overcomes all principles opposed to that sinner's salvation; all the power of the accuser, with every element of the legal dispensation, being in subjection to it. So, when fully manifested, the same principle overcomes all the pretensions of self-righteousness, as well as every element of man's dependence upon his own works. This principle of a righteousness imputed by sovereign grace is personified in Jesus Christ, is identic with him, and when its manifestation is complete, will appear as occupying his seat, ruling on the throne of divine sovereignty. Christ, in the first instance, is manifested to be the Son of God with power; next, this principle of grace is manifest to be identic with Christ, and is thus figuratively spoken of in the text as receiving from God the appellation of "my Son;" for which reason we may presume both God the Father and God the Son are denominated Jehovah our righteousness.

If the term *man* (ἄνθρωπος) were absolutely expressed in this passage, we should still suppose a personification to be intended; but it is not, and the Greek expression ὁ νικῶν, signifying *the overcoming*, may be applied even without a figure to a principle as well as to a human being. The article is masculine, but a masculine article in the Greek, may be employed with a noun or name which in English would be termed *neuter*. The masculine article ὁ and the pronoun αὐτός agree with the term λόγος, (speech or word,) as well as with ἄνθρωπος, man. In the present sentence we might suppose λόγος to be understood for what we express by principle—ὁ λόγος νικῶν, the *word* overcoming, or which overcomes, "shall inherit all things, and I will be to it God, and it shall be my son." Adopting this term, allusion would appear to be made to the word of God, (ὁ λόγος,) which, as a warrior, had overcome the beast, and as a *judge*, had condemned all not written in the book of life to perdition. This rendering would be strictly conformable to the grammatical construction of the sentence, while it appears to be in keeping with the whole representation. The Lamb has been manifested as a conqueror, and the Word has been manifested as a conqueror. We have taken these two to be identic, influenced, no doubt, by views drawn from other

portions of the sacred writings ; but perhaps, apocalyptically, this identity is to be more fully developed. We may perceive the importance of this development at the close of the book. Meantime, if the views already stated be correct, it must appear evident that, to say that God saves us by his imputed righteousness, and that Christ saves us by his merits, are synonymous declarations,—the language of the prophets and the language of the apostles thus coinciding in their representation of the *way* of salvation.

§ 476. ‘But the fearful and unbelieving,’ &c. &c. ‘shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.’—This lake must be the same as that into which *Death* and *Hell* are said to have been cast. We have already formed our views of the nature of this lake by the subjects exposed to its action, (§§ 440, 460) We suppose it to be a figure corresponding with the *fire which is to try every man’s work*. We do not suppose it to be intended to represent the state of future punishment, for the reasons already given, (§ 461;) consequently, we now judge of the things represented as having a part in this lake, by what has been before revealed respecting it.

The characters here described we take to be personifications of doctrinal principles opposed to the truth, and operating against its manifestation ; all of them opposites of the overcoming principle, or *logos*.

‘The fearful,’ or timid, (*δελός*;) are those who cannot trust Christ for salvation ; as personifications, we may suppose them to represent elements of doctrine, opposites of such as inculcate a perfect trust in the imputed righteousness of Christ. The Greek term is that applied by Jesus to his own disciples, Matt. viii. 26, and Mark iv. 40, “Why are ye *fearful*, O ye of little faith?” the timidity of the disciples affording an illustration of that want of confidence in Christ, as a refuge from the peril of vindictive justice, with which those must be chargeable who do not discern in him a sufficient provision for their justification. The same term is applied in the Septuagint (Judges vii. 3) to the fearful multitude turned back by Gideon. So, also, Deut. xx. 8, to the faint-hearted.

‘The unbelieving,’ *ἀπίστοι*, must represent something nearly of the same character. This term is applied by Jesus to the incredulous Thomas, (John xxi. 27,) “Be not *faithless*, but believing”—be not without faith, but believe. We commonly use the term faithless, as significant of something treacherous or false ; but this could not have been the sense in which it was used by Jesus, and does not appear to be the meaning we should attach to it here, although others have so understood it ; (Rob. Lex. 58.) Viewing the Apocalypse in the light of a treatise on faith, we suppose the *unbelieving* to correspond very nearly with the definition we have given of the fearful ; alike in kind, but differing in degree.

‘The abominable,’ or rather the abominated ; the word *ἐβδελγμένος*



being the past participle of *βδελύσσομαι*. The appellation, according to the Septuagint, is given to Lucifer, Is. xiv. 19, as *an abominated branch cast out*; and to man in general, Job xv. 16, “How much more *abominated* and filthy is man, who drinketh in iniquity like water.” So, Hosea ix. 10, *οἱ βδελυγμένοι ὡς οἱ ἡγαπημένοι*, things abominated, as things beloved. The term is met with under different forms in a number of places of the Old Testament, although it occurs but twice as a participle, once as an adjective, and six times as a noun in the New Testament. According to Titus i. 16, the character of abominable is to be found even amongst those that profess to know God: it is not a quality confined to the ignorant or openly immoral. The primitive sense in the original is that of something extremely disgusting, from its rank impurity. In a spiritual sense, this offensive quality is to be understood of the pretensions to self-justification, with which the Pharisees were particularly charged, (Luke xvi. 15.) Abominated principles we suppose to constitute the ingredients of the harlot’s cup, (§ 385.) The remarks made on those abominations will equally apply here. The elements of self-righteousness, generating a Laodicean lukewarmness, we presume to be peculiarly hateful and abominable in the sight of God.

§ 477. ‘Murderers,’ (*φονεῖς*),—the whole multitude of persecuting Jews are called *murderers*, (Acts vii. 53;) and Heb. vi. 6, those falling away from the faith are said to crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and must be therefore murderers, in a sense analogous to that applied to the Jews. There is a crime of murder in a spiritual sense, of which they are guilty who reject Christ. Something of this kind seems to be contemplated in the following and other similar passages: “Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing [falsehood] in matters of doctrine.” “The Lord will abhor [abominate] the bloody and deceitful man.” “Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men.” “Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter,” (Ps. v. 6, xxvi. 9, xlv. 22.) “How is the faithful city become an harlot! It was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it, but now *murderers*. Thy silver is become dross; thy wine mixed with water,” (Is. i. 21, 22.) Here the prophet contrasts a faithful exhibition of the scheme of salvation with a perverted view of it. The true ransom is represented by something worthless; the true element of joy and rejoicing, (the propitiation of Christ,) so adulterated and diluted in the exhibition made of them, as to lose its power; and the true principles of justification so misrepresented, as to be the opposite of those tending to eternal life; corresponding with this we consider the blood-guiltiness of the murderers, alluded to by the prophet, and in this passage of the Apocalypse, to be such as that with which we have supposed Babylon to be chargeable, (§ 420.)

The term '*whoremongers*' is to be understood, we apprehend, in a corresponding spiritual sense ; as, in the quotation just made from the prophet, the faithful city is said to have become a harlot. The true exhibition of the economy of redemption, symbolized by the lawful wife, is perverted to a false view, such as we suppose to be represented by Babylon, the mother of harlots ; so we suppose the principles now alluded to in this apocalyptic enumeration, to be doctrinal elements of the harlot character ; such as cannot be admitted into a correct view of the divine plan of redemption—cannot *dwell in it*, as we find further declared, Rev. xxi. 27, and xxii. 15.

The same Greek term *πόρνος*, appears to be used, Heb. xii. 16, as an equivalent for a profane person ; that is, profane (*βέβηλος*) as an opposite of holy ;—Leviticallly, profane, common, or unclean, from not having been sanctified or *set apart*—as a profanation of the Sabbath (Matt. xii. 5) consisted in making it common, as other days of the week. Parties married are set apart or sanctified ; cohabitation without marriage, or illicit intercourse, on the contrary, is the state of something profane, common, or unclean. Thus, a fornicator and profane person, in the scriptural sense, are nearly synonymous or interchangeable terms.

The apostle cautions the Hebrews against losing sight of the doctrine of salvation by *grace*, by giving countenance to any doctrinal element militating with it ; denominating such an erroneous principle a root of bitterness, capable of *defiling* (as by spots or stains) the disciple's views of faith ; and illustrating his meaning by an allusion to the conduct of Esau in parting with the promised blessing for a mess of pottage. Except in this passage, the Scriptures do not represent this elder son of the patriarch as a man of immoral life, in our ordinary sense of the term ; and we have to look for an explanation of the *fornication* ascribed to him, in some occurrence warranting the charge in a spiritual sense.

The promised blessing was an offspring which should bruise the serpent's head—a *seed* in which all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Such a seed was to the patriarchs of old, as the merits of Christ are to the Christian. On the other hand, the mess of pottage was a production of the earth, it was *red* pottage too, distinguished especially by its colour, (Gen. xxvi. 30 ;) as such, it represented the pretensions of human merit in furnishing a propitiation for sin. Esau, as the eldest son, would have been warranted in appropriating to himself the promise made to his progenitors ; and if he had believed this promise, his argument, when suffering with hunger, would have been this, ' If I am to be the father of many nations, there is no danger of my perishing now : God will provide.' But he had no faith in the divine assurance, and therefore relinquished his title to it for a single meal. Like Esau, the deluded disciple, from want of faith in the promise of salvation by grace, relinquishes all his hopes of justifica-

tion through the imputed merits of Christ, for some fancied atonement of his own providing—some imaginary means of propitiation peculiar to his earthly system. Such an error must be indeed a root of bitterness; and the teacher of such an error must prove a root of bitterness to the community, whose views of faith are *defiled* or made *common* by the influence of his doctrines. Esau is a symbol of those who lightly esteem the rock of their salvation—who, in going about to establish their own righteousness, become in a spiritual sense *fornicators*, (*whoremongers*), or *profane persons*. Corresponding with this, we suppose, apocalyptically, doctrines, or elements of doctrine, inconsistent with an entire dependence upon an identity with Christ, to be alluded to under the epithet of which we have been treating.

§ 478. ‘Sorcerers,’ (*φαρμακός*),—preparers of drugs; opposites of the true Physician, (§ 225.) The harlot system was particularly chargeable with the crime of *sorcery*, (§ 418,) and, perhaps, the principles here represented are those emanating from that system—principles of doctrine, to which the prophet gives the appellation of *sons of the sorceress*, (Is. lvii. 3.) We have already enlarged sufficiently, perhaps, upon the term; the more so as, in the present day, there is hardly a hazard of its being construed here in an ordinary or literal sense. These sorcerers profess to furnish some other remedy for the diseases of the soul than that which Christ himself has provided; in his own vicarious sacrifice.

It is said of Asa, king of Judah, 2 Chron. xvi. 14, he sought not to the Lord in his disease, but to the physicians; and all they could do for him was to lay him, when dead, in the bed filled with sweet odours and divers kinds of drugs. They were all, as Job said of his comforters, forgers of lies, physicians of no value. Such are doctrines prompting the disciple to do *some great thing* for his own salvation, instead of seeking to the Lord, and relying upon the righteousness of Jehovah.

‘*Idolaters*,’ (*εἰδωλολάτρης*),—those doing service to idols; not merely worshipping by the mummerly of outward acts of adoration, such as we suppose to be the practice of the most ignorant and superstitious of mankind, but an idolatry of the heart or mind, with which disciples of the most enlightened age and country may be chargeable. As we have before remarked, the design or motive of an action characterizes the service in which it is performed. If the motive of our conduct be to serve ourselves, to promote our own glory, *self* is the idol of our worship or service; our conduct being governed only by that covetousness which is declared to be idolatry, (Col. iii. 5.)

The priests of Baal were idolaters, not merely because they adored the idol in common with others, but because they devoted themselves to serve the idol; their employment was literally idol-service, and they finally fell a sacrifice to their own folly and madness, in endeavouring to exalt the glory



of their divinity over that of the true God. Teachers of false doctrine, representing man to be dependent for his eternal well-being upon some other power than that of his Redeemer, are like the priests of Baal engaged in idol-service; so, elements of doctrine, of a like character, may be strictly termed *servers* of idols, or idolaters.

We have supposed the image of the beast, fabricated at the instigation of the false prophet, to have been an idol of the kind in contemplation—an image of man's pretended righteousness. The false prophet, or false interpreter, was the high-priest of this idol. Analogous with this, the false construction of the language of divine revelation, prompting to the persuasion, that man is dependent upon his own merits, and is the source of his own eternal happiness, may be justly termed the high-priest of self-righteousness; while every doctrine or principle emanating from this false construction, sustained by it or auxiliary to it, may be contemplated in the light of subordinate servants of the same idol: idolaters whose efforts are wholly directed to counteract the worship of the true God, and to deprive the Redeemer of the glory due unto his name, (Ps. xxix. 2.)

§ 479. 'And all liars,' *Kaì p̃ssai toĩs pseud̃eai*;—an expression convertible with that of *p̃an poioũn pseud̃os*, every thing making a lie, occurring in the last verse of the chapter. Both passages have in view, as we apprehend, the same class of doctrines. We suppose any doctrinal element prompting the disciple to believe that he is not a sinner; or that whatever he may have once been, he has now no sin, (1 John i. 8,) to be of this description. So, any doctrine tending to deceive the disciple as to his true position in the sight of God, or as to the character and offices of Christ, (1 John ii. 21, 22,) is a thing which maketh a lie; or is figuratively a liar. This construction, rigidly carried out, must leave scarcely any doctrine of human imagination free from the charge of falsehood; still less, therefore, if applied to human beings themselves, could there be found any, whether teachers or disciples, not admitting some portion of error (something of the character of lies or liars) into their views of faith. The false doctrine itself, however, we suppose to be that here personified; the deluded disciple may find mercy, when every principle, element, or system, inconsistent with the truths of the gospel, or with God's plan of redemption, is destroyed; or has its part in the second death—the lake burning with fire and brimstone.

'Shall have their part,' &c.—We have already necessarily anticipated the consideration of this *lake*, or *second death*; serving, as it does, the purpose of a key to the interpretation of all connected with it, (§ 440.) The lake into which *death and hell* are cast, cannot be a place of punishment in the ordinary sense of the term, nor could the first death be said to be subjected to the second death, in any such sense. We cannot do otherwise,

therefore, than resort to our uniform analysis of these terms. Fire is the instrument of trial—the revealed word of God tries every work or doctrine, (Jer. xxiii. 29, 1 Cor. iii. 13–15 ;) sulphur is the element giving perpetuity to this trial, (§ 57 ;) a lake of fire and brimstone represents the perpetual action of the revealed word of God on the doctrines and systems of doctrines subjected to its power. Death and hell are systems, and the beast, the false prophet, and the accuser, are principles of this character ; consequently, the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, having their part in this lake or second death, must be doctrinal elements doomed to a perpetual trial of the revealed word of God, acting as a fire ; especially where its proper spiritual sense is understood.

This construction corresponds with the general position, that the design of the Apocalypse is to unfold the true character and offices of Jesus Christ as the LAMB, as the WORD, and as the SOVEREIGN GOD ; a development involving an exhibition of the character and *fate* of all doctrines, systems, or elements of an opposite tendency. For instruction upon the nature of a future state of rewards and punishments, we must look to other portions of the sacred writings. Here, in this revelation or unveiling of Jesus, we must suppose it to be taken for granted in the outset, that man is a sinner ; that he is an accountable being ; and that there is a state of future retribution. The whole book is addressed to churches, professing to be followers of Christ. They, of course, admit their need of a Saviour ; and they profess to look unto Jesus as their Lord and their Redeemer. To show to these that there was to be a judgment to come, and a future state of punishment for the impenitently wicked, would be something uncalled for—not required by the circumstances of the case. But these churches were labouring under the influence of certain doctrinal errors, and what was called for was an exposition of the inconsistency of these errors with an implicit faith and trust in the merits of Christ, and a pure desire to promote the glory of God.

To afford the instruction required, an allegorical history is given of the rise and progress, and decline and fall, and final perdition of a system or systems opposed to a just understanding of the truth. The close of this history is just reached ; the final perdition of all errors by their exposure to the lake of fire and brimstone constituting the termination of this extraordinary development.

This revelation, however, is not confined to a history of error alone ; the illustration is duplex ; the history of truth from the period of its partial suppression, to that of its triumphant manifestation, has been kept in view throughout the tissue of the narrative : as if the relation were that of a struggle between two opposite powers ; the ascendancy of one involving the downfall of the other. The manifestation of the new heaven and of the

new earth, and the exhibition of the new Jerusalem in her bridal character, with the making of all things new, may be regarded as the means or process by which the false doctrines contemplated in this eighth verse, are made to have their part in the *second death*.

## RETROSPECT.

§ 480. The verse we have last examined should close the chapter, as the remaining verses, together with the principal part of the next chapter, constitute the description of a distinct vision,—a vision, however, which does not add to the thread of the narration, being rather an amplification of a single particular previously adverted to.

The New Jerusalem was seen coming down from heaven immediately upon the coming in of the new heaven and of the new earth ; but as if to avoid distracting attention from the main course of events, a particular description of this new Jerusalem is postponed ; and the apostle hastens to give us an account of the remaining portion of the vision, the various particulars of which are so intimately woven with each other.

In our remarks upon the last chapter, we noticed that the occupant of the great white throne was not specifically revealed, (§ 457.) We have now, however, reached that stage of the development when he is expressly declared to be both the Alpha and Omega, and the sovereign God. The end has now come, when the Son is manifested to have given up the kingdom unto the Father, (1 Cor. xv. 24.) God himself is to be recognized in the Son, and God and the Lamb, as we shall find, are henceforth exhibited as identic : constituting one and the same temple, (Rev. xxi. 22,) and occupying one and the same seat, or throne, (Rev. xxii. 1, 3.) Whatever is affirmed of the one, we now see may equally be affirmed of the other.

“He that cometh unto me,” said Jesus, “shall never thirst ;” and corresponding with this is the language of him who declares that he will be the GOD of him that overcometh. “To him that is athirst I will give of the water of life freely.” “Come unto me,” said Jesus, “all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest ;” and corresponding with this, also, we have it here declared that God shall wipe away tears from all eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying. “If any man be in Christ,” says the apostle Paul, “he is a new creature. Old things have passed away, all things have become new ;” and here we find Him that sat upon the great white throne declaring, “Behold, I make all things new.” We are thus brought to the conclusion that it is God, *in Christ*, who thus effects this great change. As it is said, God was *in Christ* recon-



ciling the world unto himself, not imputing to men their trespasses. A reconciliation involving all that is here represented.

The Sovereign, Judge, and Ruler of the universe taking upon himself the burden of the sinner's guilt, and imputing to that sinner the merit of his own righteousness! A mystery indeed; and a mystery capable of being adapted to the comprehension of finite minds, perhaps in no other way than that by which it has been revealed. The cavilling objection to the gospel plan of redemption can no longer be made,—that it would be unjust in the Supreme Being to lay the guilt of a sinful world to the charge of an innocent being—for it is here manifested that he does not lay it upon a third being, but he himself assumes it. He interposes himself—his own merit—his own righteousness, in behalf of the disciple. God and the Lamb are thus identified; or, which is the same thing, Christ having given up the kingdom to the Father, God is manifested to be all in all, *τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν*, in the work of redemption, as he is also in the works of creation and providence.

## CHAPTER XXI.—(Continued.)

VISION OF THE BRIDE,  
THE LAMB'S WIFE.—THE HOLY JERUSALEM.

Vs. 9, 10. And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.

Καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς ἐκ τῶν ἐπὶ ἀγγέλων τῶν ἐχόντων τὰς ἐπὶ φιάλας τὰς γεμοίνας τῶν ἐπὶ πληγῶν τῶν ἐσχάτων, καὶ ἐλάλησε μετ' ἐμοῦ, λέγων· δεῦρο, δείξω σοι τὴν νύμφην, τὴν γυναῖκα τοῦ ἀρνίου. Καὶ ἀπήνεγκέ με ἐν πνεύματι ἐπ' ὄρος μέγα καὶ ὑψηλόν, καὶ ἔδειξέ μοι τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν Ἰερουσαλήμ, καταβαίνουσαν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ,

§ 481. 'AND there came unto me one of the seven angels,' &c.; or, the *first* of the seven angels, (§ 353.) This first angel, as we suppose, showed the apostle the judgment of the *harlot*; the same messenger now shows the glory of the *bride*. All of the angels having the vials of wrath came out of the temple, (Rev. xv. 6,) the developments with which they were charged being peculiarly directed to a purification of the temple service, (§ 356.) The effusion of the first vial brought forth the noisome sore, indicating the impurity of any worship resulting from the motive of *self-service* or *self-glorification*, (§ 98.) The exhibition of the harlot, or great commercial city, carried out this development, more especially by a representation of the mercenary feature of this selfishness, (§ 412.) The instrument of revelation employed in showing the disease on both these occasions is now engaged in pointing out the remedy. As if the first and great commandment, requiring a perfect love of God, brought home to the conscience, detected the absence of this love in the human heart; and thence directed the mind to the necessity, in the nature of the case, of some arrangement by which such a principle of grateful affection could be created.

'And talked [spake] with me, saying, Come,' &c.—These words so closely correspond with those employed by the angel on the former occasion, (Rev. xvii. 1,) that we may suppose them intended to bring our minds to a comparison of the circumstances peculiar to both invitations; showing the harlot and the bride, or Babylon and the New Jerusalem to be, as we have considered them, symbolical opposites. The first representing a mer

cenary system of mixed principles peculiar to the reign or kingdom of the beast ; the last a system or plan of unmixed principles of grateful love as peculiar to the reign or kingdom of the Lamb. Of the first, we have been furnished with a very full development, and have learned its history even to its *end* ; we are now about to be made acquainted with the character or peculiar features of the last, of the history of which *there is no end*. We do not enlarge upon the terms bride, or wife, or woman, here, because they have already, in some degree, engaged our attention, (§§ 426, 466.)

§ 482. ‘ And he carried me away in the spirit,’ &c.—The apostle is to be understood as *in spirit* witnessing the day of the Lord throughout the whole of this book of Revelation, (§ 24 ;) but he reminds us from time to time, parenthetically, that what is said to occur to him *in spirit* is nothing in a literal or ordinary sense. Thus, he tells us it was *in spirit* he was taken up into heaven ; in spirit, too, he was taken into the wilderness to see the judgment of the harlot ; such a spiritual position being indispensable for his seeing the harlot system in its full power, (§ 383.) In a wilderness the disciple looks around him in vain for some sufficient refuge or protection, and here, for want of any thing better, he may resort to the first object appearing to furnish the security *desired*. For the same reason, the position, as on the summit of a high mountain, is peculiar to a contemplation of the true means of salvation.

It was on Mount Zion that the Lamb appeared in glory, (§ 326 ;) and it was upon a high mountain that Moses and Elias appeared ministering to Jesus ; as the law and the prophets may be seen in this apocalyptic mountain to minister to the economy of salvation. It was (in spirit) in an exceeding high mountain, that Jesus was shown by the accuser all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them ; but a still higher mountain exhibits his own kingdom and its glory ; for in the last days, it is said, “ the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established upon the tops of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills,” (Is. ii. 2.) So, the revelation of the true shelter or economy of grace, of which the new Jerusalem furnishes a representation, appears to be alluded to, Ezek. xvii. 22–24 : “ Thus saith the Lord God, I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it ; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon a high mountain, and eminent in the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it : and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar : and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing, in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell : and all the trees of the field shall know that I the Lord have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, and have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish : I the Lord have spoken, and have done it.”



'And he showed me that great\* city, the holy Jerusalem,' &c. ; or, 'he showed me the city, the holy Jerusalem,' &c.—The apostle was taken to see a *bride*, a woman, and he was shown a *city* ; and this city, it is implied, is the bride, the Lamb's wife. So it was in the case of the harlot : the woman seen in the wilderness, sustained by the beast, bore upon her forehead the name *Babylon*, and was expressly declared at the close of the chapter, (Rev. xvii. 18,) to be that *great city* ; and, thenceforth, the whole account of the judgment upon her consists in a description of the desolations of a great city. There can be no question in any mind as to the entire identity of the woman and the city in both of these illustrations. What the city represents the woman represents, and *vice versa* ; different figures representing the same thing. So, as the bride or wife is the opposite of the harlot, the new Jerusalem must be the opposite of Babylon, and the holy city the opposite of the self-styled *great city*.

We do not suppose the term *holy* to be applied here to Jerusalem merely in contradistinction to Babylon or to other cities. Two Jerusalems appear to be contemplated, both in the Apocalypse and in the prophecies—one heavenly, the other earthly ; one free, the other in bondage, (Gal. iv. 26 ;) one holy or set apart, the other not holy ; or if once holy, subsequently so perverted or abused, as to be no longer considered such.

The holy Jerusalem here contemplated, is described as *descending out of heaven from God* ; identifying her with the *new Jerusalem* described in the second verse of the chapter. She is, besides, in both passages represented as the bride, the Lamb's wife ; the new Jerusalem is therefore the holy, and that which is not holy, must be the old Jerusalem.

The new vision of peace is *set apart*, destined to endure for ever, being essential to a just representation of the worship or service of God ; the first vision was not intended to endure : like an old garment, it is now to be laid aside. Babylon (the system of confusion) was sitting on many waters—resting on many mountains—sustained by a power seen to have arisen from the sea or abyss. The holy city (the true plan of safety) comes immediately from God out of heaven. The old vision of peace was represented by an earthly city, repeatedly made captive ; her beauty marred, and finally destroyed, while yet in bondage. The new vision is represented as coming

\* Some editions of the Greek, according to our common English version, attach the epithet *μεγάλη* (*great*) to the holy city ; other Greek editions, as that from which we copy, omit it, and apparently with good reason. Babylon we may presume, was particularly designated the *great city*, as great in her pretensions, or as *great* in the estimation of men ; but it appears more in keeping with the style of the Apocalypse, to avoid applying any epithet to the holy city which might seem to assimilate her with the other.

pure and unmixed from the divine source of her being, and destined to remain for ever *free*.

Vs. 11-13 Having the glory of God: and her light (was) like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, (and) had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are (the names) of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. On the east, three gates; on the north, three gates; on the south, three gates; and on the west, three gates.

ἔχουσιν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ Θεοῦ. ὁ φωστὴρ αὐτῆς ὅμοιος λίθῳ τιμιωτάτῳ, ὡς λίθῳ ἰάσπιδι κρυσταλλίζοντι. Ἐχουσα τεῖχος μέγα καὶ ὑψηλόν, ἔχουσα πυλῶνας δώδεκα, καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς πυλῶσιν ἄγγέλους δώδεκα, καὶ ὀνόματα ἐπιγεγραμμένα, ἃ ἔστι τῶν δώδεκα φυλῶν τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ. Ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς πυλῶνες τρεῖς, καὶ ἀπὸ βορρᾶ πυλῶνες τρεῖς,

§ 483. 'Having the glory of God,' &c.—In its proper place in the preceding narrative, a description was given of the descent of the new Jerusalem, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. It was not expedient then, as we have observed, (§ 480,) to enlarge upon this bridal appearance; further particulars were postponed, in order that the *end*, the important *end* of the whole narration might be reached, as it were, with as little delay as possible. This being completed, we are now, by way of episode, indulged with a precise description of the preparation and ornaments of the bride—her dress and her garniture; the figure only being changed, the array is that of a city instead of that of a bride. The *preparation* consists of walls, and gates, and foundations, instead of robes and garments; and the ornament or adorning is the glory of God, compared to the light of a most precious stone, clear as crystal, instead of being symbolized by the jewels of a bridal *trousseau*. As a bride, the preparation of the economy of grace still consists in a robe of righteousness, and in garments of salvation; but, as a city, her walls are salvation, and her gates are praise. In both cases, the preparation and the adorning are immediately from the same source of divine sovereignty, without any intermixture of human merit, or any glory or praise of human fabrication. The glory of the new Jerusalem is not her own glory; it is the glory of God. As it is said of the disciple, (1 Cor. i. 31,) "let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord."

'And her light (was) like unto a stone most precious;' or, rather, the light of *it*, (ὁ φωστὴρ αὐτῆς;)—the pronoun αὐτῆς relating to the feminine noun δόξα, glory, and not to the city, (ἡ πόλις;) the city has neither light nor glory of her own, but she appears resplendent with the light of the glory of God. The word *was* is supplied unnecessarily in our common version, and the conjunction καὶ (and) is not found in all editions of the Greek. The reading apparently should be, 'Having the glory of God, the light of it like to a stone most precious, to a jasper stone (*crystallizonti*) shining like crystal; the comparison of the light of this glory to a jasper stone or diamond, as we should call it, indicating particularly the qualities of pureness and

clearness. The light of the glory of God is unmixed with the rays of any other glory. The light of the glory with which the city is arrayed, thus corresponds with the fine linen of the bride, *shining clean*, (*λαμπρὸν καθαρόν*.) As it corresponds also with the raiment "white as the light, in which Jesus appeared on the mount of transfiguration."

Babylon is described, Rev. xviii. 7, as having vainly glorified herself, boasting of her own perfection: a mixed system exhibiting no glory but that derived from man's pretensions to righteousness. The economy of grace, on the contrary, holds forth no glory but that to be derived from the imputed merit of divine perfection. The light of this glory is compared to that of an exceedingly precious stone; and such, in a certain sense, it may be considered; for it is the light of the glory of Him who is declared to be the *corner stone, elect, precious*; a light exhibited by the Son of God in his own person when manifest in the flesh. As it is said, (Matt. iv. 16,) "The people which sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them which sat in the region of the shadow of death, light is sprung up;" and a light which he now exhibits, in its most spiritual sense, in this unveiling of himself figuratively, through the medium of his wife or bride.

§ 484. 'And had a wall great and high.'—We may presume the city to have now found its *site*, as its wall, gates, and foundations of the wall are described; and this site may be supposed to be upon the mountain, or range of mountains, to the summit of which the apostle was conveyed. We are not to imagine the position of the favoured spectator to be merely the peak of an eminence. In eastern language, and indeed in Scripture phraseology, a mountain may be the appellation of a large tract of country; the whole of the high land, as distinguished from the low country, going by the name of a single mountain. Mount Lebanon, or Libanus, for example, is said to be one hundred leagues in circumference, (Calmet.) The holy city rests upon the mountain—the Rock of our salvation (Christ)—as the bride is dependent upon the bridegroom, or the wife upon her husband; and as her opposite, the harlot, rested upon the beast. The city may be contemplated as the crown of the mountain, (Prov. iv. 9, xii. 4,) while the mount is the sure foundation of the city; at the same time, no one can be on the top of the mount without being in the city, or can be an inhabitant of the city without being a dweller upon the mount. Mount Zion, and the holy city, are thus sometimes used in Scripture as convertible terms. We cannot suppose the apostle to have been taken to a great and high mountain, merely to see a city *coming down* from heaven; a sight with which he might have been equally favoured upon the open plain; he was taken to the top of the mountain, no doubt, because the city to be revealed was there located. As it is said, Is. xxv. 6, "And in this *mountain* shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things;" the same rich provision



of sovereign grace being in one place symbolized by a city, and in another, by a feast.

All the walls of the city are here spoken of as one continuous wall, indicating the complete protection afforded by it, leaving no room or opening by which an enemy may be introduced. There can be no doubt, however, that the means of security are the same, whether the figure be singular or plural: as it is said, Is. xxvi. 1, 3, "In that day, [that is, in the day of the feast of fat things,] shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks;" and Ps. cxxii. 7, "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces." So, Ps. li. 18, "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem." So it was said of Jerusalem: Jer. xv. 20, "I will make thee unto this people a fenced brazen wall." While of Babylon, it is said, "Her foundations are destroyed, her walls are thrown down." "Yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall." "The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire." (Jer. i. 18, li. 44, 58.) The height of the wall of the holy city being particularly specified in a subsequent verse, we defer our remarks on that particular feature for the present. The wall itself we take to be a symbol of the *righteousness of JEHOVAH*, which, imputed to the disciple, furnishes a *complete protection* against the powers of legal accusation. On this account it is most appropriately represented as a barrier "great and high," while it corresponds in effect with the divine assurance, (Zech. ii. 5,) referred to on a former occasion, (§ 452.)

'And had twelve gates.'—"Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem," says David, Ps. cxxii. 2, 3. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together. It cannot be of the literal Jerusalem that the Psalmist is here speaking; for the king of Israel could not consider it extraordinary that his feet should stand within the gates of his own city, or that the city in which he actually dwelt should be compactly built like a city. If we take into view, however, the spiritual application of the Psalm, and suppose David to be speaking of the plan of redemption, or *vision of peace*, we perceive immediately the peculiar force of the comparison. Of this economy, or plan, it may be said that its divine author has caused it to possess arrangements analogous to those of a well-built and well-fortified city; and that it is indeed a subject of praise to be permitted to come within the compass of its protection—if we may but stand within its gates.

Such is the holy city here revealed from heaven: not the way of salvation itself, but one of the figures or symbolical pictures by which that way is represented; for there is but one way in fact, and that is in and through Christ. As Jesus himself declares, Matt. vii. 13 and 14, "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life;" and John x. 9, and

xiv. 6, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find *pasture*." "I am the *way*, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." Of which way it is also said, Rom. v. 1, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." "For through him (Eph. iv. 18) we have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

The means of salvation are in Christ alone—his merits. To be adopted in him is to partake of these merits, and there is no other name or way whereby we can be saved. It is the *exhibition* of this way, and not the way itself, which is represented as having *twelve gates*. The purpose of these several avenues, we may understand better when we come to consider what it is that is admitted by them into the city.

§ 485. 'And at' or over 'the gates twelve angels, and names *super-scribed*, which are of the twelve tribes of Israel.'—The angel, apparently representing the judge or ruler of a tribe, is stationed over the gate, and the name of the tribe subject to each of these judges, or angels, is written over the gate; thus each tribe may be said to have the privilege of entering by the gate bearing its name, subject to the judgment of the angel. The gates of a fortified city are usually apertures in the wall, the bulwark extending over them, and the thickness of the wall allowing room for the accommodation of the sentinel over the gate, or even to allow of an apartment for a small body of soldiers, (*corps de garde*,) and perhaps in ancient times for the administration of justice; the courts being held at the gate.

The angel at the gate is not merely a porter, his duty is to prevent the entrance of every one not privileged to enter. In this respect he acts the part of a judge. His seat at the gate is a throne or tribunal of judgment; as it is said of the spiritual Jerusalem, Ps. cxxii. 5, "There are set *thrones*, (seats,) the thrones of the house of David"—tribunals of judgment. "Thither the tribes go up," it is said, "the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel;" and the reason given for thus going up, is that there the *thrones of judgment* are set. We may suppose these tribes to represent elements of doctrine, of which there are twelve classes, the angel being the revelation of truth operating as a criterion by which the elements of each class are to be tried. These doctrinal elements may be said to go up to the spiritual city to bear testimony; inasmuch as each of them furnishes its portion of evidence in favour of God's plan of salvation,—that is, each portion admitted to be correct by the judge or angel at the gate. This portion we may suppose to be identic with the twelve thousand of each tribe, sealed the servants of God, (Rev. vii. 4–8.)

The angel, or judge, however, may not be the member of a tribe, or preside as such. "Verily, verily," said Jesus to his apostles, "ye which

have followed me, in the *regeneration*, (the new creation,) when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel," (Matt. xix. 28.) This epoch of the *regeneration*, we may suppose to be now apocalyptically reached—the Son of Man is seen sitting in the throne of his glory, (the great white throne,) having made all things new—having regenerated all things. The holy Jerusalem, as a city compactly built, is exhibited; and the tribes, the elements of the first dispensation, are now going up to bear their testimony to the truth of the covenant of grace;—the leading elements of the gospel revelation (the twelve apostles) being the appointed judges; in other words, the revelation of the first testament is now being judged by that of the new.

Perhaps a just interpretation of the names of the twelve tribes and of the twelve apostles might throw light on this illustration, showing in what manner certain gospel elements operate in discriminating between doctrines according with or opposed to the economy of grace,—judging, in fact, of the application made of different principles of the legal dispensation. But this may not be necessary. The mystic number *twelve* may, as a whole, represent either of the dispensations. The twelve angels may represent the law and the testimony, acting as judges, and admitting no principle into a just view of the economy of redemption inconsistent with its truth; or they may represent elements of the gospel testimony alone, acting in the same capacity, as judges or as keepers of the gate, in preventing the entrance of any element of doctrine into this vision of peace, inconsistent with the ruling element of sovereign grace.\* The judgment of the angels or keepers of the gates, we suppose to be a figure nearly equivalent to that of the judgment by the books; as we see by the last verses of these two chapters, (Rev. xx. 15, and xxi. 27,) that those not written in the book of life are cast into the lake of fire; and those only which are written in this book are permitted to enter the city.

‘On the east three gates; on the north three gates,’ &c.—The city was quadrangular, and had an equal number of gates on each of its sides. The whole earth, in the time of the apostles, was considered an area of a corresponding figure. The city thus presented its gates on all sides—symbolizing perhaps the universality of this city of refuge, as open to all sects or denomi-

\* We noticed in the enumeration of the numbers sealed, (§ 176,) the substitution of the tribe of Manasseh (forgetfulness) for that of Dan, (judgment.) Corresponding with this, we may suppose none of the elements of *judgment* to be admissible in the *economy* of grace; the apostles (angels or messengers of the gospel revelation) being judges, (sentinels at the gates.) Or, as angels are messengers, and prophets as well as apostles are messengers, these porters at the gate may represent twelve prophets, indicating by their predictions the elements admissible into the plan of redemption.



nations, or principles of such sects, by whatever name they might be called, provided only that they are found *written in the Lamb's book of life*; or provided they were not elements *working abomination or making a lie*. That is, they must be principles peculiar to God's plan of salvation, and containing nothing inconsistent with it—every other consideration being immaterial; or, as we might say, it being immaterial otherwise, from what quarter they came. These four sides or quarters of the city, however, may afford the material of further analysis, corresponding perhaps with the figurative use of the same points of compass in other portions of Scripture; as in the last chapter of the prophecies of Ezekiel, where it is said the holy oblation shall be offered foursquare, with the possession of the city.

V. 14. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Καὶ τὸ τεῖχος τῆς πόλεως ἔχων θιμελίους δώδεκα, καὶ ἐπ' αὐτῶν δώδεκα ὀνόματα τῶν δώδεκα ἀποστόλων τοῦ ἀρνίου.

§ 486. It is not said that the city itself had twelve foundations. The foundation of the city was the mountain, or rock; as it is said, "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Neither are we to suppose the city to have twelve walls, with each a foundation; but in an exhibition of the plan of salvation, the means of defence or protection may be shown to depend upon a certain number of principles. To set forth these principles is to set forth the foundation of the wall. "As a wise master-builder," says Paul, "I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon; but let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon," (1 Cor. iii. 10, 11.) Here the foundation of instruction appears to be alluded to, rather than the foundation of salvation. Paul had preached to the Gentiles in such a way as to lay a foundation of instruction for teachers or preachers succeeding him. He expected them to build upon or to follow up this instruction; but he cautions them, in doing this, not to cause it to appear that there is any other foundation for the hopes of the disciple than that which is laid in the merits of Christ.

The true wall of salvation—the protection against the wrath to come must be the righteousness of Jesus Christ: the imputed righteousness of God. The wall is to the city what the breastplate or cuirass is to the warrior. What the mansion or house is to him that inhabits it—what the bulwark is to the fortress—what the robe is to him that wears it—the righteousness or merit of Christ, comprehending his work of propitiation, is to the disciple.

It is not said that the apostles constitute these foundations, but only that their names are in or upon the foundations. We may suppose all of them, like Paul, by their teaching, to have laid the foundation for exhibiting the righteousness of Christ as the wall of salvation. The apocalyptic city is

not the economy of grace itself, but a representation of it; and this representation may be said to require the exposition of certain fundamental principles which the apostles have been the instruments of setting forth. The names of these inspired teachers, properly interpreted, might afford some clue to these several principles, but we are not obliged to consider each apostle as maintaining a particular doctrine essential to this exhibition of the righteousness of Christ as a wall or defence; the twelve may represent, as a whole, the gospel development from which so many fundamental principles are to be gathered. This appears the more probable, when we consider that we have no particular account of the teachings of some of the apostles; that two of the evangelists were not apostles, and that Paul himself was not one of the twelve.\*

Vs. 15-17. And he that talked with me, had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, a hundred (and) forty (and) four cubits, (according) to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

Καὶ ὁ λαλῶν μετ' ἐμοῦ εἶχε μέτρον κάλαμον χρυσοῦν, ἵνα μετρήσῃ τὴν πόλιν καὶ τοὺς πυλῶνας αὐτῆς καὶ τὸ τεῖχος αὐτῆς. Καὶ ἡ πόλις τετράγωνος κείται, καὶ τὸ μήκος αὐτῆς ὅσον καὶ τὸ πλάτος, καὶ ἐμέτρησε τὴν πόλιν τῷ καλᾷ μῶ ἐπὶ σταδίους δώδεκα χιλιάδων· τὸ μήκος καὶ τὸ πλάτος καὶ τὸ ὕψος αὐτῆς ἴσα ἐστὶ. Καὶ ἐμέτρησε τὸ τεῖχος αὐτῆς ἑκατὸν τεσσαράκοντα τεσσαρόνων πηχῶν, μέτρον ἀνθρώπου, ὃ ἐστὶν ἀγγέλου.

§ 487. 'And he that talked with me had a golden reed,' &c.—Something similar to this occurs Rev. xi. 1, 2. On that occasion, however, the reed was an ordinary measuring rod, and no admeasurement appears to have been actually made, apparently for the reason we have there assigned, (§ 236.) Here the reed is said to be of *gold*. Its material is truth. A particular element of truth is represented as a measure or criterion of judgment; and the instrument is actually employed, directing our attention to the dimensions detailed;—the angel, messenger, or means of development, revealing

\* We are to recollect that at the time of the vision, the gospel revelation was not complete, the Apocalypse itself being part of it; neither were the several books of the New Testament, or even of the Old, collected into one well-known volume, to which reference might be made as at the present day. In speaking of the Old and New Testament writings, therefore, there was almost a necessity for the metonymy here supposed, that of putting the tribes for one, and the apostles for the other; and the number one hundred and forty-four for the instruction to be derived from both.

As we have supposed the Old Testament revelation (represented by the twelve angels with the names of the twelve tribes over the gates) to afford such means of discrimination, as to prevent the admission of inconsistent principles into the view of God's plan of salvation; so, the entire revelation of the New Testament (the twelve foundations with the names of the twelve apostles) may be contemplated as affording the means of exhibiting the righteousness of Christ as the protecting wall of the same divine plan of redemption.

these particulars ; for it is not necessary to suppose the angel to have been seen, (even in vision,) making the compass of the city to ascertain its length and breadth.

Paul speaks of grace given according to the *measure* of the gift of Christ, (Eph. iv. 7,) that is, without limit ; for the gift of Christ is a thing immeasurable ; and Jesus himself says, (John iii. 34,) that God giveth not the Spirit by measure. So the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, is spoken of (Eph. iv. 13,) as a desirable extent of knowledge, which must be equally unlimited, for in Christ dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily, (Col. ii. 9.) So it is said, (Eph. iii. 17-19,) alluding to something infinite, and not to be measured, "That ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length, and depth and height ; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." The measuring of this exhibition of the economy of grace (the city) is something of this kind. The consistency of the plan itself with the divine attributes, and its perfect adaptation to the end for which it is designed, and the correspondence of the exhibition with the whole testimony of Scripture, are things capable of being tested by the standard of revealed truth. At the same time it is only the initial number of these dimensions that is to be regarded ; no literal sense is to be attached to them, and certainly nothing inconsistent with the attribute of infinity.

'And the city lieth foursquare,' &c.—The quadrangular or square form may be taken as a type of perfection and completeness ; a square being the most simple, perfect, geometrical figure—the element we may say of all other figures. If we wish to measure a triangle or circle, it is desirable first to reduce it to a square ; so if we would ascertain the superficial contents of any given area, we measure by squares, as we ascertain the solid contents of a mass of matter by cubic squares.

In remarking upon the three parts of the great city, however, (§ 372,) we have suggested a reason why this holy city may be contemplated as of four parts ; and the same suggestion may help us in accounting for this representation of its quadrangular form. The mixed system of redemption, was composed of three elements only—the acknowledged sinfulness of man, the admitted action of divine justice, and the requisite means of propitiation. It went no further, as if its whole end and aim were merely to secure the eternal well-being of the creature. The economy of grace, on the contrary, in addition to these three features, possesses a fourth—the eternal obligation of gratitude under which the redeemed sinner is placed to serve and glorify his God and Saviour. These four parts may be supposed to correspond with the four sides or *aspects* of the city ; the divine plan of mercy having an *equal regard* to each of these particulars. The sinfulness of sin is to be



exhibited ; the justice of divine wrath is to be manifested ; the sufficiency of the propitiation of Christ is to be set forth, and the obligation of love—grateful love—free from any other motive of action, is to be inculcated. The gates or tribunals, with their angels, on each of the four sides of the city, may be contemplated as charged with providing for the entrance of such elements only as are capable of passing the ordeal in these particulars. The elements of *forgetfulness*, (from the tribe of Manasseh, § 176,) are admitted only in place of those of judgment, (from the tribe of Dan,) by pleading the promise of sovereign grace, “ I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins,” (Is. xliii. 25.)

§ 488. ‘ And he measured the city with a reed,’ &c.—The city was a perfect square, the length was as large as the breadth ; not only so, it was a perfect *cube*. The length, and the breadth, and the *height* of it were equal. Such a description cannot be taken in any other than a figurative sense : to speak of the height of a city as equal to its length or breadth, is sufficient to bar any literal construction. But this may not be the only design ; the cubical form of the city renders its appearance similar to that of an ark. So, we suppose the ark, (the only means of salvation amidst the flood,) and the ark going before the children of Israel in the wilderness, to represent the same economy or arrangement of divine mercy, as that here spoken of as the holy city.

The term *furlongs* we take to be a *mere* adaptation of expression to the figure or symbol in contemplation ; estimating the furlong or *stadium* as the eighth part of a mile, the city measured fifteen hundred miles on each side, which is sufficient to afford an idea of *immensity* ; the area being equal to more than two millions of square miles, and the contents of the *ark* nearly three thousand millions of cubic miles. We suppose, however, as in other cases, the decimal signs or ciphers to represent indefinite or infinite quantities ; the initial number being all requiring particular attention. In the present case the length, breadth, and height being *twelve* thousand cubits each, the intention may be to direct our minds to the exhibition of redeeming love, to be found in the testimony of the old dispensation, (the twelve patriarchs or tribes,) comprehending the subject of the sacred writings from Moses to Daniel inclusive ; the testimony of the twelve minor prophets, and that of the *twelve* apostles ; that is, all that is written in the New and Old Testaments. The covenant of redemption, comprehending the whole—the law, the prophets, and the gospel. The purport of the verse being equal to a declaration, that the economy of grace, when measured by the standard of divine truth, and understood in its proper spiritual sense, will be found to correspond with all that the sacred writings contain upon the subject of God’s government, and man’s salvation.

'And he measured the wall,' &c.—Here there is the same propriety of adaptation in the term of measurement as we have noticed on other occasions; the measure of cubits being as appropriate in speaking of the altitude of a wall, as that of furlongs would be in describing the extent of a city; and the units and tens being as appropriate here, as the hundreds were to the measure of the wine-press, (§ 344,) and the thousands to that of the city. As to the length of the wall of the city, that must of course correspond with the length and breadth of the city itself, as it is to be presumed that the wall encompassed the city; the gates being apertures in the wall, the measure of these must be included in that of the wall.

The cubit spoken of here, is said to be the measure of a *man*; but this is immediately afterwards explained to be the measure of the *angel*. The cubit, as a measure of length, is derived from the extent of the fore-arm of a man, from the elbow to the wrist, or as some say, to the middle finger; and this idea was, no doubt, associated with the use of the original term, (*πῆχυς*, the fore-arm.) The angel measured the wall one hundred and forty-four *fore-arms*, the measure or arm of a man, that is, of the angel. It is angelic measure, therefore, that we have here; we must know the length of the angel's arm, in order to judge of it. In other words, it is not human measure; and is not to be contemplated in any degree in a literal sense, except so far as to represent something immense in its kind. The wall of a city two hundred feet in height, necessarily implying a proportionate thickness, presents an insurmountable barrier to the approaches of an enemy; much more if this height, in *angelic measure*, be supposed to correspond with the immense circuit of the city. Such an insurmountable barrier to the assaults of the enemy of souls, is to be found in the wall of salvation provided in the righteousness of Christ—the walls and bulwarks referred to, Isaiah xxvi. 1.

The numerical sign *one hundred and forty-four* we suppose, as on other occasions, to point out something sustained or emanating from the testimony furnished by the old and new dispensations, the combined testimony of prophets and apostles—twelve multiplied by twelve. The wall was previously declared to be great and high; the term *great* probably applying to the thickness or breadth of the wall. The expression is, no doubt, designed to point out the ample sufficiency of the protection afforded by this divine economy, as infinitely beyond that furnished by any other system of salvation. "Walk about Zion," says the royal psalmist, "and go round about her: tell the towers thereof; mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; (estimate her strength;) that ye may tell it to the generation following," (Ps. xlviii. 12, 13;)\* an estimate elsewhere spoken of as to be

\* It must be evident here that the allusion is to the spiritual Jerusalem. We have no authority for supposing the literal city to have been so remarkable for its walls

obtained by dwelling in the house of the Lord, and inquiring in his temple, (Ps. xxvii. 4.)

V. 18. And the building of the wall of it was (of) jasper: and the city (was) pure gold, like unto clear glass. Καὶ ἦν ἡ ἐνδόμησις τοῦ τείχους αὐτῆς ἰασπιδις, καὶ ἡ πόλις χρυσίον καθαρόν, ὁμοιον ἰάλλῳ καθαρῷ.

§ 489. ‘And the building of *its* wall,’ &c.—That is, the mass or body of the wall was jasper; not merely of jasper, but jasper itself. The light of the glory of God, with which the city is resplendent, was compared (v. 11) to the brilliancy of a most precious jasper stone; and we have now the reason given for this splendid appearance, which is, that the whole outer clothing of the city, (the wall,) with which it is encompassed, is jasper itself. The wall, the means of protection afforded by the economy of redemption, consists of the imputed righteousness of Christ; and it is with the glory of this divine righteousness that the economy or city is arrayed.

The jasper, when put for a gem, we suppose to be what we usually denominate the diamond, a precious stone affording a pure white light, unmixed with any coloured ray, except it be by reflection. As a massive stone, jasper seems to be put for what we usually understand by adamant. The leading idea associated with the latter term is, that of hardness or impenetrability. This wall possesses all the preciousness and splendour of the diamond, with the impenetrability of the adamant. In fact, it is the latter quality which gives the stone the preciousness and brilliancy for which it is so highly appreciated. If diamonds were less hard, they would be less brilliant, and being less brilliant they would be less valuable; so it is the perfect impenetrability of the means of defence afforded by Christ, as our righteousness, that renders him so precious to all believing or trusting in him. Christ himself (God manifest in Christ) is this spiritual jasper or precious stone—the chief defence of the city, as it is the chief jewel of the bride: as it is said, Zech. ii. 5, “For I, saith *Jehovah*, will be unto her a

and bulwarks in the time of David; whereas the artificial defences of Babylon were so extraordinary as to attract the attention of geographers and historians of the earliest times. The walls of Babylon have been variously represented at from three hundred and sixty to three hundred and eighty furlongs in circuit; sixty-five to two hundred feet in height, and twenty-five to thirty-two feet in thickness, (v. Calmet.)

Of this proud city it might be said, that all was done for her defence which the wisdom and labour of man could effect. In this respect, she appropriately represented a doctrinal system of human works; the utmost that man in his position by nature can possibly effect. The end of the city, and the final dilapidation of her immense walls, illustrates at the same time the fate of such a system of human pride, and the temporary character of its reputation. In the dimensions of the wall of the New Jerusalem, there seems to be an allusion to these walls of Babylon; reminding us how infinitely the provisions of the economy of grace surpass any means of salvation of man’s device.



wall of fire round about her, and will be the glory in the midst of her." The wall of the city being identic with the array of the bride, and the bride or wife being identic with her husband, (the Lamb,) the righteousness of either is the same.

'And the city was pure gold,' &c.—*Gold pure, like crystal pure.* This exhibition of the economy of redemption is pure truth; there is no alloy of falsehood, of error, or of mistake in it; it is like gold tried in the fire. Its purity compared to the clearness of crystal, corresponds with that ascribed to the river of the water of life; the terms *βαλος* and *χρύσταλλος* referring alike to crystal: the first apparently is applied to a small body as to a gem, the last to a large mass or stratum of rock. The first term appears to be employed here because most in keeping with the prominent idea of preciousness to be associated with the city or economy; the last is more appropriately used in speaking of a river, an abundant stream, of which the essential characteristic is its purifying quality. The gold of the city and the water of the river of life are equally pure. The truth as it is in Jesus, represented by the holy city, is unalloyed; and the atonement of Christ, represented by the river of life, is free from the admixture of any means of propitiation other than that of his providing. Pure gold is as precious as it is pure; and what truth can be more precious than that of salvation through the *imputed* merit of the Son of God?

Vs. 19, 20. And the foundations of the wall (were) garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation (was) jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

Καὶ οἱ θεμέλιοι τοῦ τείχους τῆς πόλεως παντὶ λίθῳ τιμῇ κεκοσμημένοι· ὁ θεμέλιος ὁ πρῶτος Ἰάσπις, ὁ δευτερός σάπφειρος, ὁ τρίτος χαλκηδών, ὁ τέταρτος ἐμάκμαδος, ὁ πέμπτος σαρδόνυξ, ὁ ἕκτος σάρδιος, ὁ ἑβδομος χρυσόλιθος, ὁ ὄγδοος βήρυλλος, ὁ ἔνατος τοπάζιον, ὁ δέκατος χρυσόπρασος, ὁ ἐνδέκατος ἰάκινθος, ὁ δωδέκατος ἀμέθυστος.

§ 490. 'And the foundations of the wall of the city (were) garnished,' &c.—The word rendered garnished is the same as that expressed by *adorned*, when applied to the decorations of the bride in the second verse of the chapter. The foundations must be the same as those said to bear the names of the twelve apostles, (v. 14.) We suppose them to indicate so many fundamental doctrines, upon which the all-important doctrine of the righteousness of Christ, as a wall of defence, may be said to rest; Christ himself, as the Rock of salvation, being the foundation or basis of the whole city, including the walls—the whole economy of redemption resting upon him, as in effect it must, upon the basis of divine sovereignty—God manifest in Christ.

To *decorate* the foundations of a wall would appear to be labour lost, as we suppose these to be beneath the surface of the ground; but the wall

in question is that of a fortified city, and we may take it for granted that the city is surrounded by a moat or deep ditch. Such moats may be still seen about many ancient cities, usually of considerable breadth, allowed to remain dry in time of peace, and then even cultivated as a garden; the water being let in from some neighbouring stream, when occasion calls for such a defence. The deeper and broader this moat, the more complete the protection afforded by it.\*

In the present case the city is to be supposed perfectly fortified. The foundations of the wall rise from the very stratum of rock upon which the city is built, and the same stratum forms the bottom of the moat or ditch, the breadth of which bears a due proportion to the height of the wall. The foundations of the wall are thus as much exposed to inspection as the wall itself, and of course the ornaments of these foundations are equally exhibited. The new Jerusalem, it is true, is a vision of peace; but the reason that she is so is, that she displays a perfect preparation for security against the assaults even of the most powerful enemies. The economy of grace is an economy of *peace*, because it affords a perfect provision for the safety of all taking refuge in it from the efforts of the legal adversary to procure their condemnation. The moat or ditch, of which the existence is implied, filled as it may be in a time of need from the river of the water of life, (the atonement of Jesus,) must present an impassable barrier to the approaches of the accuser and his forces.

The apostle Paul alludes (Eph. vi. 13–17) to the same abundant means of defence, under the figure of the armour of a single warrior; an equipment from God's armoury, and not from man's: the breastplate of righteousness corresponding with the wall of the new Jerusalem, and the shield of faith capable of quenching the fiery darts of the *evil one*, representing an implicit trust in the same atoning provision as that here symbolized by the river of the water of life; a river with which, we suppose, the holy city may be at any time encompassed. There seems to be a like correspondence between the wall of the holy Jerusalem with its twelve foundations,

\* It is not necessary, however, to confine our ideas of these foundations strictly to the *underpinning* of the walls; they may be supposed to represent the whole side of the wall on the exterior, from the foundation nearly to the top:—the wall itself, consisting of an immense mound, with a perpendicular facing on the outside, of different courses of stone; the inner side forming a *glacis*, a gradual descent into the city. So Is. xiv. 15, τὰ θεμέλια τῆς γῆς, (Sept.,) is rendered in our version, the *sides* of the pit. This does not materially change the figure, for the wall of a city, such as we have supposed, depends for its stability upon its stone facing, as the wall of a dwelling-house depends upon its underpinning as a foundation. In Amos and some other passages, our common version employs the term *palaces*, where the LXX use θεμέλια; but we could not speak of palaces of walls, although we might perhaps substitute *bastions* or *bulwarks* for foundations.

and the breastplate of the high-priest, under the Levitical dispensations, with its twelve compartments, each garnished with its gem, and distinguished by the name of its respective tribe, (Ex. xxviii. 15-21.)

§ 491. 'The first (was) jasper;'—that is, *was with* jasper, the word garnished being understood. Of this foundation, jasper is the decoration or ornament. These precious stones are contemplated here as gems, affording a characteristic feature of their respective foundations. We have already supposed the jasper to be put for the diamond; and so we find the term rendered in our common version in the enumeration of the gems of the breastplate, (Ex. xxviii. 18;) ἵασπις, (jasper,) according to the Septuagint, the third stone of the second row, being that to which our translators have given the appellation of *diamond*.

The light of the glory of God is compared to the brilliancy of jasper, (v. 11;) and the wall, (the righteousness of God in Christ,) is said to be jasper, (v. 18;) and we suppose Christ himself the foundation—the rock upon which the whole city is built—to be the spiritual jasper. The first foundation, therefore, partakes of the nature of, bears the characteristic feature of, and derives its chief ornament from, the primary formation upon which all the others depend. The fine lustre of the diamond, as we have noticed, is due to the impenetrable quality of the gem; so, the glory of Christ results from his invincible power as a Saviour—a power necessarily dependent upon the attribute of his *divinity*. The defence afforded by the whole superstructure, (the wall,) depends upon the fundamental doctrine that Christ is God manifest in the flesh—Jehovah our righteousness; that his merits are those of the sovereign God; and for that reason, they possess the quality of affording an impenetrable protection. This is the fundamental doctrine, without which the imputation of Christ's righteousness as a wall of salvation could not be sustained; and in the absence of which, the city (the economy of grace) must appear incapable of affording any sufficient defence.

'The second, sapphire.'\*—This is described as a blue stone of various shades, "next in hardness and value to the diamond," (Rob. Lex. ;) It represents, therefore, very appropriately, the doctrine next in importance to

\* In order to arrive at a correct understanding of the illustration intended by these various gems, we should know the qualities for which they were remarkable, especially amongst the Hebrews. We do not pretend to this knowledge, and therefore aim only at throwing out some general hints, indicating the possibility of certain analogies between the precious stones mentioned in the sacred writings, and certain doctrines or doctrinal truths, symbolized, as we suppose, by them.

All these gems partake of the hardness and impenetrability of the diamond, they differ in appearance rather than in substance, as one star differeth from another star in glory. They may symbolize different exhibitions of the same truth, rather than exhibitions of different truths.



that just noticed. This stone is spoken of, Job xxviii. 16, as remarkable for its value, inferior as it were, only to the value of wisdom ; or, in the patriarch's sense of the term, no doubt, that which maketh wise unto salvation. The sapphire was one of the stones of the breastplate of the high-priest. A paved work, as it were of sapphire stone, is said (Ex. xxiv. 10) to have been seen under the feet of the Most High, resembling the body of heaven in clearness (purity ;) indicating, apparently, that revealed truth by which the Deity is exhibited, arrayed in his peculiar attribute of sovereignty. A promise is given, Is. liv. 11, to Jerusalem, (once barren and desolate,) that her foundations shall be laid with sapphires ; a promise perhaps fulfilled in this exhibition of the Apocalypse. Sapphires are alluded to as remarkable for their polish, (perfection of beauty,) Lam. iv. 7 : " The polishing of her Nazarites was of sapphire." The cerulean appearance of the sapphire is ascribed to the firmament over the heads of the living creatures, Ezek. i. 26 ; corresponding with the exhibition of divine sovereignty, just now supposed to be alluded to : and a zone of sapphire is spoken of, Ezek. ix. 2, according to the Septuagint as a girdle of the loins ; in which respect the gem may be equivalent to the apocalyptic figure of *truth*, as represented by a golden girdle. In confirmation of this last suggestion, the name *sapphire* is supposed to have been a corruption of Ophir, the name of a country as remarkable for the production of this precious gem, as it was for the purity of its gold.

According to Trommius, the Hebrew word סַפִּיר (סַפִּיר) *σάπφειρος*, signifies, amongst other meanings, a book, βιβλίον, or a thing written ; and סַפִּיר a discourse or word, which he renders by the Greek term *logos*, (λόγος.) The verb סַפִּיר signifying also, with other meanings, *to announce*, and *to say*, or *to reveal*. These meanings suggest the probability that this gem designates this second foundation, as the purpose or word of God, revealed as it is in the Scriptures ; corresponding with the *zone*, and with the gold of Ophir, as the characteristic of truth ; and with the firmament, as an exhibition of divine power and sovereignty.

§ 492. 'The third, chalcedony,' (χαλκιδών.)—A name found only in this place in the New Testament, and not at all in the Old ; of course the gem itself must be designated in other parts of Scripture by a different appellation. It is supposed to be a precious stone, of which the modern cornelian is a variety, (Rob. Lex. 819.) The Greek name has a close resemblance to the term χαλκός, brass, and suggests the probability that the stone has the appearance of that metallic substance when polished ; and as a burning or fiery appearance is compared in Scripture to that of fine brass, (Rev. i. 5,) the chalcedony of the Apocalypse may be the Hebrew carbuncle, or Greek ἄρθραξ, which, according to the Septuagint, (Ed. H. & L., Bos.) is classed with the sapphire and jasper in the second

row of the priestly breastplate, (Ex. xxviii. 18.)\* As carbuncle (*ἄρ-θραξ*) is not found in the New Testament, and chalcedony (*χαλκηδών*) is not found in the Old Testament, we may feel ourselves safe in considering the appellations put one for the other. So we find, in the figurative language of the Old Testament, *brass* (*χαλκός*) and carbuncle to be used almost as equivalents; gates of brass, and gates of carbuncle being both distinguished for their power of resistance, as well as for their splendid appearance, (Ps. cvii. 10; Is. xlv. 2, liv. 12.) Of the holy Jerusalem it is said, Is. lx. 17, 18, that brass is to be exchanged for gold, &c., after which her walls are to be called salvation, and her gates praise. This may be equivalent to changing gates of brass for gates of carbuncle or chalcedony. Gates are repeatedly mentioned in Scripture in connection with the subject of praise, 2 Chron. xxxi. 2, Ps. ix. 14; and to find admission within the gates of the covenant of grace, must be indeed a subject of thanksgiving. As brass, carbuncle, or chalcedony, constitute the scriptural material of gates, we may suppose the ornament of this third foundation to indicate the fundamental doctrine of *grace*, the *gift* of salvation; which to the disciple affords the same cause of praise as an entrance within the gates of the city of refuge affords to him who finds safety in that asylum.

'The fourth, emerald.'—The Greek appellation of this stone (*σμάραγδος*;) is supposed to have been applied to all gems of a green colour; according to Trommius, however, it is variously used in the Septuagint for Hebrew names, signifying carbuncle, adamant, and sardonyx. In fact, there is such a want of exactness in the Greek rendering of Hebrew names of gems, that we cannot judge much by it in comparing the names of the Old Testament with those of the New. In the time of the apostle John, we suppose the application of the term translated *emerald*, to have been very generally confined to gems of that pellucid greenish hue usually ascribed to sea water; that is, water of the sea in shallow places, where it is in some degree tinged by vegetable substances at the bottom; for the water of the mid-ocean, it is well known, is proverbially blue. We find the appearance of a *rainbow* compared, Rev. iv. 3, to that of an emerald; an appearance symbolical, as we have supposed, (§ 120,) of an imperfect exhibition of the means of reconciliation with God, or rather, an imperfect view of such provision; the defect being in the organ of vision of the beholder, and not in the rainbow itself. In the Septuagint, the name is applied to the third stone of the first row in the priestly breastplate, (classed with the sardius and topaz,) rendered in our common version a *carbuncle*; while we have given the

\* The term is not so quoted by Trommius, but according to his Concordance *ἄρ-θραξ* is variously used for coals, tongue of fire, (Heb.) bdellium, beryl, carbuncle, and brass.

name *emerald* to the first stone of the second row, (classed with the sapphire and diamond,) to which the Septuagint has assigned the name of carbuncle, (*ἀνθραξ*.) The verbs *σμάω*, to wipe off or purge away; and *σφαραγέω*, to send forth a great noise, bear a near resemblance to the Greek appellation of this gem, (*σμάραγδος*;) and as the signification of one of them corresponds with the *action*, and that of the other with the *sound* of the waves of the sea, the name of the stone may be said to accord with the association of ideas suggested by its sea-green colour. Contemplating the sea with its waves roaring, as a figure of the threatenings of divine justice, or of that visitation of wrath and indignation by which, without an ample provision of atonement, the guilt of the transgressor must necessarily be *wiped off*, we may take this *emerald* foundation to represent the fundamental doctrine of the sinner's liability under the law to eternal condemnation and punishment; this doctrine being indispensable to an exhibition of Christ and his righteousness, as the only wall of salvation.

§ 493. 'The fifth, sardonyx.'—This name occurs nowhere else either in the Old or New Testament, although Trommius supposes it to be put for *sardius*, (Ex. xxxv. 9,) where our common version has rendered the term *onyx*. It cannot be designed for the sardius here, as that stone is enumerated the next in order. Trommius assigns to it the same Hebrew appellation (*סַרְדִּי*) as that given the *onyx*, Job. xxviii. 16, and we may take it for the *onyx* of the breastplate.

*Onyx* (*ὄνυξ*) is the Greek term for the *nail*, either of a human being or of an animal, and the stone is supposed to have received its name from its white appearance, resembling the white of a human nail. The *sardius* is said to be a stone of a blood-red colour. It is probable that the name *sardonyx* is a compound of these two, and that the gem takes its name from the combination of red and white colours, corresponding with the appearance of living human flesh.

*Flesh* we suppose to be put, in symbolical language, for righteousness or moral perfection, either real or pretended, (§ 438.) The precious gem here contemplated, must represent a real and not a pretended perfection. As a garnishing of the fifth foundation, therefore, we suppose it to represent the fundamental doctrine of the necessity of a perfect righteousness for the justification of the disciple in the sight of God; such an indispensable means of justification being one of the essential principles upon which Christ is manifested to be the Lord our righteousness, and his righteousness a wall of protection.

'The sixth, sardius.'—This gem is uniformly admitted to be of a blood-red colour, (Rob. Lex. 677,) and it must be so contemplated in the sacred writings; its appellation in Hebrew, with a slight change of points, signifying *red*, *man*, &c.—*אַרְבָּן* *sardius*, *אַדָּם* *ruber*, *rufus*, *אַדָּם* *vir*, *homo*, &c.,



(Adam.) It is also one of the gems of the breastplate. Its Greek name is said to be derived from Sardis, a city where it was first found. The stone, however, is mentioned in Exodus as a gem well known; and if so, it appears hardly probable that it was first found in Sardis. Taking the Hebrew appellation into view, it seems quite as probable that the Greek *sardius* is derived from *sarks*, (flesh,) and that the deep redness of the stone resembled the bloody appearance of the flesh of victims recently slaughtered. The foundation ornamented by this gem may indicate, therefore, the necessity of a vicarious offering, or the fact of such an offering or propitiation, either of which may be considered a doctrinal element, forming part of the foundation of a Christian's faith in the righteousness or merits of his Redeemer—the wall of his salvation. It may have been for this reason that the *sardius*, or blood-red stone, was the first gem in the High Priest's breastplate; as the atonement of our great Mediator may be considered his first qualification for entering into the holy of holies, where he ever continueth to make intercession for us, (Heb. vii. 25.)

§ 494. 'The seventh, chrysolite,' (*χρυσόλιθος*, gold-stone.)—The name chrysolite is found nowhere else in Scripture, according to our common version, but the Septuagint gives the same Greek appellation to the first gem in the fourth row of Aaron's breastplate—a stone to which our translators have given the name *beryl*. It cannot be the same, however, as beryl is the ornament of the next foundation. The name is said to have been applied by the ancients to all stones of a golden colour; and some suppose it to have designated the topaz of the moderns, (Rob. Lex :) but here the topaz (*τοπάζιον*) is enumerated as the garnishing of the ninth foundation.

Chrysolite may be, as a figure, among gems what we suppose gold to be amongst metals, a representation of truth or of the true riches—the true ransom of the soul, as distinguished from all supposed means of redemption, an allusion to which may be found Lam. iv. 1, 2: "How is the gold become dim; how is the most fine gold changed! the stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street. The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter!" Here the stones of the sanctuary and the fine gold, as well as the sons of Zion, are figures of the same truths, corresponding with the *gold-stone* and gold of the Apocalypse;—the precious gems with which Jerusalem had been adorned by her Maker and Redeemer, as well as the city or covenant itself, appearing in a very different light when contemplated by the prophet from that in which she is now seen. The original composition of the vision of peace was always such as now represented; it was only under a legal and self-righteous construction that this composition appeared of a different character; as the prophet continues to say, Lam. iv. 7, 8, "Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk,

they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire : their visage is blacker than a coal ; they are not known in the streets ; their skin cleaveth to their bones ; it is withered, it is become like a stick."

The foundation garnished with the gold-stone, we suppose to be a just exhibition of the character of the true riches—durable riches and righteousness, or the necessity of such riches—to show the necessity of the merits of Christ as a means of redemption ; being equivalent to showing the necessity of his righteousness, as a wall of salvation.

'The eighth, beryl,' (*βήρυλλος*.)—This is the name of the tenth stone of the breastplate of Aaron, according to our common version, and of the eleventh according to the Septuagint. It is said to be the name of a gem of a sea-green colour, found principally in India, (Rob. Lex. 108.) This colour comes too near that of the emerald to draw a distinction between them ; but we have no doubt there is a marked difference between the gems, however difficult it may be for us to arrive at a knowledge of it. The beryl of the breastplate, Ex. xxviii. 20, (*שֹׁהַב*), Trommius supposes to be the same as the onyx and sardonyx ; and besides this, in his H. and C. Index he assigns to the same root the sardius, the sapphire, and the emerald. The angelic personage seen by the prophet on the banks of the Hiddekel (Dan. x. 6) is described as having a body like *beryl*. We can hardly suppose this to be a body of a sea-green colour.

The beryl of Cant. v. 14, according to our common version, is rendered by the LXX *θαλασσίς*—the name both of a city and of a precious stone, This name *θαλασσίς* or *χαλασσίς* (Sept.,) Heb. *הַרְסִיָּה*, Lat. *solaris* (from *הַרְס* *sol*, the sun,) signifies *of* or *belonging to the sun*. As, what is termed the *east-gate*, Jer. xix. 2, in our common version, is the *sun-gate* in the original, (vid. margin c. v. and Concord. of Trommius,) so the beryl of Ezek. i. 16, as we have it, is the *θαλασσίς* of the Septuagint, applied to the colour of the wheels of the living creatures ; which wheels may reasonably be supposed to have the appearance of those of the Ancient of Days described (Dan. vii. 9) as of burning fire—resembling the feet of the form like unto the Son of man, Rev. i. 15, "Like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace,"—an appearance probably similar to that of the *beryl-like* body seen by Daniel, as above alluded to. Taking these peculiarities into view, we think the *beryl* of the Apocalypse must be a gem throwing forth a strong light, as of flame, or as of the rays of the rising sun, and may thus symbolize a manifestation of Christ as the Lord our righteousness, or be intended to point out this doctrine as one of the foundations or supports of the wall of salvation.

'The ninth, a topaz ;' or rather *topaz*, the indefinite article *a* having been unnecessarily introduced. We are not to suppose each foundation, or bastion, garnished with a single gem. The idea to be associated with this description is, that these structures are adorned each with its peculiar *species*

of gem. The topaz was the second stone in the first row of the breastplate of Aaron, both according to the LXX and our common version. According to Cruden this stone is said by some to be of a green colour, by others of a golden colour. The topaz of Ps. cxix. according to the Septuagint, is rendered in our common version *fine gold*, as distinguished from ordinary gold. It is said of wisdom, (spiritual understanding, we suppose,) Job xxviii. 19, "The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold." From these examples it would appear that, as a figure, the topaz of Scripture is spoken of more in reference to its great value than to any peculiarity of colour. In the high priest's breastplate the gem bore the name of *Simeon*, which signifies *hearing*, or *he that heareth*; that is, in mystic phraseology, not merely the hearing of the outward ear, but a hearing of the understanding—a comprehension of the true or hidden meaning of the written word—which, in fact, is the *wisdom* of God in a mystery, (1 Cor. ii. 6, 7;) that wisdom which may be said to be essential to a perception of the merits of Christ as a wall of salvation, and the value of which is so particularly set forth, Prov. iii. 14–15: "Happy is the man that findeth *wisdom*, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies; and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared with her." This wisdom or spiritual understanding we suppose to be essential to setting forth the *wall* of salvation in its true light, and may be thus termed one of its foundations.

"The tenth, chrysoprasus."—This name implies something of a golden vegetable-green colour, as distinguished from the sea-green hue of the emerald, (§ 492.) *Πράσον* (prason) being the name of a species of leek, chrysoprasus is equivalent to a *golden-leek*. Vegetable green appears to be a figure in Scripture of a flourishing condition, as Ps. lii. 8, "I am like a green olive tree in the house of my God," (Sept. *fruitful*.) Ps. xcii. 14, "They shall be fat and flourishing," (Heb. fat and green.) Ps. xxiii. 2, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures," equivalent to the assurance of Jesus, "By me if any man enter he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture." The grass of the earth, indeed, as in the case of the *green horse*, (§ 155,) we have supposed to represent the evanescent pretensions of human righteousness; but the vegetable green of a *precious gem* may be considered the figure of a permanent verdure—a durable righteousness, a never-fading glory. The chrysoprasus may thus represent the true pasture, the true nourishment of eternal life; the merits of him, in allusion to whom it is said, Is. xi. 4, "He shall feed his flock like a Shepherd;" and Rev. vii. 17, "For the Lamb in the midst of the throne shall feed them;" and who himself says, John vi. 55, "My flesh (my righteousness) is meat indeed, and my blood (my atonement) is drink indeed." Of this precious



doctrine, so essential to the spiritual wall of salvation, we think this tenth foundation (or bastion) may be a symbolical figure.

§ 496. ‘The eleventh, jacinth,’ or hyacinth, (*ἰάκινθος*.)—This does not appear to have been one of the gems of the priestly breastplate, unless it be so under a different name. Some Greek interpreters, according to Trommius, have substituted it in Ezekiel for the *ἀνθραξ*, (carbuncle,) and others for the *θαλασσίς*, (topaz.) The LXX apply it as a material of covering to the red badger-skins and blue curtains of Exodus, &c. As a means of defence and perhaps of offence it was one of the materials of the breastplates of the Euphratean horsemen, Rev. ix. 16, 17, where it is associated with fire and brimstone, and where we have supposed it to correspond in appearance with the smoke issuing from the mouths of the horses, (§ 222.) Trommius supposes the colour to be sky-blue, (*hemels blauw*, in Belgian.) The hyacinth is said to be described by the ancients as of a violet colour, (Rees’ Cyc.) From the connections in which the term is found as a colour, we suppose it to partake more of the appearance of a blueish or light smoke-coloured cloud; such a cloud as that which led the Israelites by day through the wilderness;—a cloud and a pillar of smoke alike symbolizing the veil of humanity under which the Deity was manifest in Christ, and that symbolical mode of revelation by which Jehovah has seen fit gradually to develope the mystery of salvation to the understanding of his people; as it is said of the coming of Christ, (Cant. iii. 6,) “Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke?” The cloud was the medium of access between God and the highly favoured children of Israel; and Christ, as a spiritual cloud, is the mediator and medium of access between God and man. We may accordingly suppose this eleventh support of the wall of salvation to be the exhibition of Christ in his mediatorial capacity—the doctrine of substitution, or of the virtual intercession of him who veiled himself in human flesh, that he might unveil the truth of his becoming sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him, (2 Cor. v. 21.)

‘The twelfth, amethyst,’ (*ἀμέθυστος*.)—This name occurs in the Old Testament but in two places, (Ex. xxviii. 19, xxxix. 10,) where it is spoken of as one of the gems of the priestly breastplate. In the New Testament it is found only in this passage of revelation. The Greek derivation is said to be from *μεθύω*, to be drunken, preceded by *ἀ* privative, the compound originally applying to an herb or gem supposed to operate as a charm against drunkenness. The gem is said to be of a deep purple or violet colour, a colour similar to that of *the blood as it appears in the veins of a living person*. Purple is also the colour usually ascribed in Scripture to the juice of the grape; the gem may therefore represent the *new* or *spiritual wine*, which Christ is to drink with his disciples in his Father’s kingdom. This true wine is the opposite of the mixture in the harlot’s cup, and is

accordingly the spiritual *amulet* capable of preserving the inhabitants of the earth from that drunkenness with which they were said to have been chargeable, (Rev. xvii. 2.)

As the red colour of the sardius may remind us of the blood of the victim slaughtered in sacrifice, (indicating the necessity of an atonement,) the purple of the amethyst may be supposed to represent the life-giving efficacy of that atonement, transfused, as it may be said, by *imputation*, into the spiritual body of the disciple; the atonement actually made by Christ being subsequently (as a matter entirely of *grace*) accounted that of all adopted in him. Such a spiritual transfusion of the element of eternal life, from the Redeemer into the spiritual being of the redeemed, may be termed the *amethyst* of the twelfth doctrine sustaining the spiritual wall of salvation; the last course of stone of this portion of the apocalyptic edifice being perhaps equivalent as a figure to the *head-stone* spoken of by the prophet (Zech. iv. 7.)

§ 497. The twelve characteristics of these fundamental elements of the wall of salvation are then as follows:

1. Jasper—(the diamond)—Precious and impenetrable—the precious corner-stone—Christ himself upon whom the whole fabric may be said to depend.
2. Sapphire—The heavenly covering of perfect beauty—the canopy of divine perfection—the moral perfection of Christ.
3. Chalcedony—(carbuncle)—The cause of praise (the gates)—grace in Christ, the only way of access into the city—and the element excluding every mercenary principle.
4. Emerald—(sea-green)—Representing the requisitions of divine justice, and indicating the indispensable necessity of a provision to meet them.
5. Sardonyx—(white flesh)—Living flesh—the righteousness or merits of Christ, as the only means of justification.
6. Sardius—(red flesh)—The slaughtered body of the victim—the blood shed, without which there is no remission of sin—the only adequate propitiation.
7. Chrysolite—(gold-stone)—The true riches—Christ the ransom—the only means of redemption.
8. Beryl—(*θαυράκις*)—Christ, the Sun of righteousness—the only source of boldness or confidence, (Ps. xix. 5.)
9. Topaz—(great value)—Wisdom—the true wisdom—the spiritual understanding of the truth, as it is in Jesus.
10. Chrysoprasus—The golden vegetable green, perennial—Christ the true pasture—the position of rest.
11. Jacinth, or Hyacinth—The cloud, the pillar of smoke—the Mediator, Christ veiled in the flesh.

12. Amethyst—(purple)—The living blood—the atoning provision—the antidote to the cup of the harlot, and the means of eternal life to the disciple, as it is also the means of exhibiting the sovereignty of God in Christ.

These gems may be considered one precious stone appearing only in different lights, each throwing forth its peculiar lustre. Christ throughout is the basis of every gem, as he is the only stone of the corner, and as he is also the foundation of the whole edifice, the stone cut out of the mountain, which itself became a great mountain and filled the whole world. These remarks, however, are to be taken only as suggestions, showing the probability that certain definite doctrinal ideas are to be attached to these several foundations and their garniture.\*

Besides this garnishing, the foundations of the wall are said (verse 14) to bear the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. As we have remarked, (§ 486,) we do not suppose each of the apostles to have advocated respectively a particular doctrine, but we take these twelve foundations to represent twelve fundamental doctrines, to be found in the New Testament revelation, of which the twelve apostles (collectively and in the aggregate) constitute a type or figure. In fact, the expression in the fourteenth verse does not appropriate a particular name to each foundation. The twelve names may be upon every stratum of stone, or upon every bastion, or the same names may be upon the twelve *strata* as a whole. So Paul speaks of the disciples at Ephesus as built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets; that is, upon the foundation set forth in the Old and New Testament,—the foundation of the disciples' faith and hope, of which Christ is the chief corner-stone, and so represented in both of these sacred volumes.

Vs. 21, 22. And the twelve gates (were) twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city (was) pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

Καὶ οἱ δώδεκα πύλῳνες δώδεκα μαργαρίται· ἀνὰ εἷς ἕκαστος τῶν πύλῳνων ἦν ἐξ ἑνὸς μαργαρίτου. καὶ ἡ πλατεῖα τῆς πόλεως χρυσίον καθαρόν ὡς ὕαλος διανγής. Καὶ ναὸν οὐκ εἶδον ἐν αὐτῇ· ὁ γὰρ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ ναὸς αὐτῆς ἐστὶ, καὶ τὸ ἄρῳον.

§ 498. 'And the twelve gates were twelve pearls,' &c.—The word *were* is not expressed, but it is implied. After having said, however, that these twelve gates were twelve pearls, it would appear superfluous to add, that they were each formed of a different pearl; but if all of them were made *out of* one and the same pearl, then it would be necessary to state it, and such we suppose to be the meaning of the expression here. The twelve gates were twelve pearls, and every one of them was fabricated *out of* or *from* one and the same pearl, (ἐξ ἑνὸς μαργαρίτου.)

\* The same construction affords us an idea of the kind of ornament alluded to, (Ezek. xvi. 12,) the original decoration of the vision of peace, as first intended to be revealed, before its perversion by misconstruction.



Pearls, as of a pure white colour, may be symbolical of perfect purity—freedom from mixture with any other substance; but their peculiar characteristic is their value, and this value is estimated by their magnitude. A pearl of sufficient size to form a gate, must be a hyperbolical figure of something of immense value; a pearl sufficient for the formation of twelve gates, must represent therefore something of infinite value, wholly incalculable. Such, we may say, is the value of an entrance into the kingdom of heaven, the value of eternal life; for what will a man give in exchange for his soul? The main idea to be illustrated here, we think, is that, whatever be the number of entrances into the holy city, the way, the door, the gate, is the same. The way of access is the same, although represented perhaps by twelve different figures; the *material* of the gates is the same, and the preciousness of the access by these gates is alike infinite.

The kingdom of heaven is said to be (Matt. xiii. 45, 46) “Like unto a merchant seeking goodly pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.” Not merely like the pearl, or like a merchant alone, but like a merchant going through this whole process of seeking, finding, selling, and buying. The kingdom of heaven represents the introduction of a new order of things, or of a principle upon which all things become new; as if the disciple, going about to find a way of salvation by works of his own, wrought from mercenary motives, finds the way of salvation by *grace*. This way once found, he relinquishes all dependence upon his own works, all claims upon any merits of his own, counting these as nothing that he may win Christ, and be found *in him*. Christ is the pearl; the kingdom is the order of things, or the principle by which, or upon which, eternal life is obtained through Christ, instead of the old way through the works of the law. So the kingdom of heaven is said to be like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened. It is a principle entirely changing the state of the elements affected by it. We do not suppose the holy city to be a figure precisely of the kingdom: but the kingdom may be a state of things incident to a position in the city. The admittance to the new position, and the admittance into the city affording this position, must be by the same gate or avenue, and that is Christ;—the apocalyptic holy city being, as we apprehend, a vision or representation of what Paul terms the new covenant, or new economy. No principle or doctrinal element is admissible into it, except through the appointed way of entrance, that is, through Christ, as he is variously represented in the Scriptures. All the principles of the economy of grace thus result from the character and work of Christ. Whether we regard him, therefore, as the way of salvation for the disciple, or as the way by which alone the principles of the economy of grace can be established and exhibited, he is equally the pearl of great price, the pearl of inestimable value.

To those that believe, he is precious. To such, Christ is indeed the pearl of infinite value. It is the being found in him which makes him the pearl. In effect, it is substitution in Christ in the sight of the Most High, which constitutes him the *gate*, or way of eternal life.

Here we have also another feature of the change resulting from making all things new. Under the legal dispensation the gates were of *brass*; under that of grace they are of *pearl*. The gates of brass are broken, (Ps. cvii. 16; Is. xlv. 1, 2;) the bars of iron are cut asunder, and the gates of righteousness (justification) are opened, (Ps. cxviii. 20, 21.) At the gates once desolate, (Lam. i. 4,) are now all manner of precious fruits, (Cant. vii. 13.) For the same reason, we apprehend, it is said, The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob, (Ps. lxxxvii. 2.)

§ 499. These gates of pearl are those at which, or over which, twelve angels, or messengers were said to be stationed, and which bore all the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. We may suppose these angels to represent modes of revelation, that is, of conveying divine truth to the mind, as we have considered the *tribes* types of a similar character. Corresponding with this, we suppose the gates or portals to represent doctrines peculiar to the economy of grace, illustrated or alluded to in the history of the children of Israel, or handed down to us in the dispensation of the legal economy as a whole. As among the Hebrews a proselyte could become a member of the Israelitish nation only by adoption into one of the tribes, a tribe was to a proselyte what a gate is to a city—an avenue or means of admission to the privileges of that favoured people. Hence these tribes may be put for so many different illustrations of the mode by which the disciple becomes a child of God; and of the criterion by which, as by a judge at the gate, (§ 485,) every element or principle belonging to the economy of grace is to be tried, as it were, before it can be admitted to that economy, or be manifested to belong to it.

That our meaning may be better understood, we enumerate twelve modes or figures by which the one way of participation in the benefits of redemption is illustrated, or set forth, both in the Old and New Testament: in the former, by types and symbols and propheticall allusions; in the latter, by a doctrinal form of instruction.

As we have remarked in respect to the foundations, and names thereon of the apostles, we are not obliged to suppose each gate to be designated by the name of a single tribe. The names of all of the twelve tribes may be upon every gate; or the expression may be intended only to represent the names of the tribes in the aggregate, upon the gates, as a whole. That is, whatever the gates signify, it is to be found in some measure illustrated or symbolized in the Old Testament revelation.

The calling of Abraham out from his native land, and from amidst his kindred, to a land which he was to receive especially as a *gift* of God,

appears to have been a type or symbol of the calling of the disciple from his position by nature, under the law, to his position by grace—called, as the apostle says, (1 Peter ii. 9,) out of [a position of] darkness into God's marvellous light.

The removal of the children of Israel from their state of Egyptian bondage to the free enjoyment of the promised land, was in like manner a type of the removal of the disciple from his position of bondage under the law, to his position of liberty under the gospel dispensation of grace, (Rom. vi. 14.)

The liberation of the people of Judah from their state of captivity in Babylon, and their restoration to their own land, may represent the deliverance of the disciple from the position of captivity peculiar to the mixed or adulterated system of faith, and his enjoyment of the position resulting from an entire dependence upon the merits of his Redeemer—a change alluded to 2 Cor. vi. 17.

Here are three illustrations of the disciple's admission to a participation of the privileges of the economy of grace, represented by the holy city; they may be supposed to constitute the three gates of one of the sides, more especially as they are all three of nearly the same character.

§ 500. There are said to have been three rites peculiar to the admission of proselytes to the privileges of the Jewish nation,\* circumcision, baptism, and sacrifice. The first indeed was essential even to those born of Hebrew parents; as every male child without it was declared to be cut off from his people. Of the second, it is also said, that the whole people were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. With regard to the last, the stranger upon his admission was required (Num. xv. 14–16) to offer the same sacrifices as the Hebrew born. There was to be one law and one manner for the one as for the other; with both the shedding of blood was required for the remission of sin. So, according to the New Testament, the spiritual circumcision, the spiritual baptism, and the spiritual sacrifice, are equally necessary to bring the disciple into the position of a member of the household of faith—circumcised *in Christ*, (Col. ii. 11,) baptized into his death, (Rom. vi. 3,) and brought nigh by his blood, (Eph. ii. 13.) These may

\* "Quod si proselyti ex gentibus Legem hanc recipere, et in communionem populi admitti cuperent. præter circumcisionem sacrificio quoque et baptismo initiandi erant, quibus tribus mediantibus ipsi primum Israelitæ in fœdus transierunt. . . . .

Baptismus in totius corporis immersione consistebat, quæ præsentibus tribus testibus peragebatur tantaque necessitatis et quondam reputabatur et etiamnum habetur, ut sine illa circumcisio proselyti nil valeat. Imo fœminarum proselytarum quæ circumcisci non poterant initiatio quondam tantum sacrificio, et baptismo, nunc posteriori solo fieri consuevit.

Si Proselytus cum familia sua ad Judæorum sacra transiret, non ipse solum sed etiam liberi atque infantes baptizari solebant."—(Antiq. Heb. C. Ikenii.)



be considered three other modes of illustrating the avenue to a participation of the privileges of the economy of grace, and, as such, are represented by the three gates of another side of the city.

There are three effects spoken of as resulting from adoption into the name of Christ, (at least, as we understand the passage,) 1 Cor. vi. 11: ablution, sanctification, and justification. These may constitute three other illustrations of the way of admission represented by the three gates of another side of the city.

The ablution, or washing, we suppose to be the washing of regeneration alluded to Titus iii. 5—the new birth, the adoption of sons, as it is termed in the New Testament, (Gal. iv. 5,) of which the adoption of the proselyte or stranger, in the Old Testament, was a type or figure. As it was said of such an individual, after his admission to the privilege of a participation of the paschal lamb, (Ex. xii. 48,) “And he shall be as one born in the land;” and as it is said of such, by the writer upon Hebrew antiquities, just referred to, that they were considered *as infants newly born*, (§ 321;) accounted no longer connected with their former nation or kindred, but to be of the nation into the body of which they had been engrafted.\* To this peculiarity allusion appears to be made by our Lord in his question to Nicodemus, (John iii. 5,) “Art thou a master (teacher) of Israel, and knowest not these things?” (John iii. 10.)

The sanctification, we take to be the setting apart in Christ according to the purpose of God, symbolized first by the setting apart of the whole Hebrew nation as a peculiar people; subsequently by the setting apart of the priestly office, and the things of the temple; and further by the sanctification of persons and things otherwise mentioned on several occasions in the Old Testament.

The justification, in the name of Christ and by the Spirit of God, must be the same as justification through the righteousness of Christ imputed to the individual justified, which we suppose to be shadowed forth by the vicarious offerings of the Levitical dispensation—the victim sacrificed suffering the penalty of death, in order that the guilty individual in whose behalf the blood is shed may be justified by the merit of the offering, or be so accounted. As it is said of Jesus, (1 Pet. ii. 24,) “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye are healed;” or, as it is expressed 2 Cor. v. 21, “He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

These three processes, it will be perceived, are not three different ways of salvation, but three different modes of representing the same way. As

\* “Qui autem hac ratione initiati erant, ut recens nati infantes considerabantur, (Conf. Joh. iii. 5; Tit. iii. 5; and 2 Cor. v. 17,) nec pristinam amplius gentem aut consanguineos habere, sed ex illa gente, cui inserti erant, esse censebantur.”—(1b.)

they are classed together by Paul, in the passage quoted from first Corinthians, they may be taken as three gates on the third side of the holy city.

§ 501. The remaining three figures may be termed those of identity—marriage, communion, and inheritance. The first of these has been so frequently adverted to in the course of these remarks, as a figure of the means by which the disciple is admitted to a participation of the benefits of redemption, that it appears unnecessary to enlarge upon it under this head. They two shall be one flesh was the law of the institution when God first created man, male and female, and they two have been so accounted one throughout the whole course of divine and human legislation to the present day. The law of Moses so contemplated man; Jesus Christ pronounced that law unchanged; and the prophets and the apostles alike employed the rite of marriage as one of their most striking illustrations of the mystery of redemption.

The second means (communion) was represented under the Levitical dispensation by the participation of the offering at the altar, in the offering made, (1 Cor. x. 18,) and may be considered as identic with what we usually term the mediation or intercession of Christ: not an *oral* intercession, but the coming in of the victim sacrificed between the offender and his offended God—the medium of access—the new and living way, by which man is virtually presented before God in the name of Christ, and is contemplated as in the face of the anointed: a medium of reconciliation desired by the patriarch Job as a *days-man*; represented under the Levitical economy by the high-priest entering within the vail as the representative of the suppliant; and applied in the writings of the apostles to the person and office of Christ as the high-priest of our profession—"the mediator of the new covenant," "our peace," "through whom we have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

The third means, that of inheritance, was typified by the gift of the promised land, as by testament to Abraham and his seed; by which title it was inherited by his heirs according to the flesh. It is illustrated also by the laws of inheritance under the Levitical dispensation; and, we may say too, by principles of human law nearly as universal as those pertaining to the marriage state; and is so alluded to by the apostle Paul, in adverting to the operation of a testamentary title, (Heb. ix. 16, 17.)

The inheritance left by Christ to his followers, we take to be the inheritance of his own merits: the merit of his own justifying righteousness, and the merit of his own atoning sacrifice; the disciple coming into possession of these, as by bequest of a testator who has the perfect right to dispose of his possessions as he may himself see fit. The bequest being made, on the death of the testator the heir succeeds to the possession of the estate as identic with the former possessor; the one proprietor being substituted. *in the eye of the law, for the other.*

We are by no means tenacious of this classification of these figures,<sup>5</sup> or of their appropriation to particular avenues ; our main design is to show the probability, that the twelve gates of one pearl are put for so many doctrinal *illustrations*, intended to bring home to the understanding of the disciple the one way of salvation opened in Jesus Christ. The apocalyptic holy city we suppose to be a *vision* or representation of the economy of grace. The things coming into its gates are principles peculiar to this economy ; no principle or doctrinal element, inconsistent with this *representation* of God's plan of salvation by grace, is admissible into it. The gates represent the means of discrimination, (§ 485 ;) these means of discrimination are certain views of the way of salvation through Christ ; every principle therefore admitted into this representation must accord with one or the other of these views, and must be so admitted either as a principle of adoption, sanctification, substitution, or some other mode illustrated by one or the other of these gates.\* The means of discrimination, or *criteria* of admission, are all in effect identic. The doctrines represented by them all result in the same truth : Christ is the only door, way, or avenue ; so the gates are all of the same *pearl*. There is but one way of salvation, although in the sacred writings there may be a certain variety of modes by which that one way is accommodated to human apprehension.

§ 502. ' And the street of the city was of pure gold,' &c.,—gold so pure as to possess the transparency of crystal—truth, (§ 27,) especially revealed truth. With the transparency of this gold of the city we may associate also the glorious character of the particular kind of truth represented by it ; but we think the prominent peculiarity of this gold is its perfect purity, its freedom from the smallest admixture of error.

The whole city was said in the eighteenth verse to be pure gold. The word rendered street (*πλατεία*) signifies *broad way*, coming from *πλάτος*, breadth, which expresses (Rev. xx. 9) the whole surface of the ground, (Rob. Lex. 593.) The *platea* of the city may be put here for its whole site or platform. The edifices being of gold and the site of gold, it was all of pure gold. The whole of this vision of peace, including its *platform*, is of pure unalloyed truth. The street, or broad way of the city, might indeed represent the way of salvation, but we think the description of the avenue is more particularly comprehended in what is said of the gates. The ways of the city, corresponding with the portals, are all of the same character, and lead in the same direction : as it is said of true wisdom, all her ways are

\* The elements of the mixed system (Babylon) were, as we have seen, principally of the *mercenary* character, merchants, &c. Principles of this character could not be admitted into the representation afforded by the holy city, through either of the avenues enumerated ; they could not be contemplated as belonging to either of those modes of illustration.



pleasantness, and all her paths are *peace*: they all tend to reconciliation with God,—that peace which passeth understanding.

Gold, however, we are to bear in mind, is valuable as well as pure, and precious in proportion to its purity. The gold of the street thus reminds us of the *exceeding riches* of the grace of God in his kindness (*benignitate*) towards us through Jesus Christ, (Eph. ii. 7;) the *unsearchable riches* of Christ, (Eph. iii. 8;) the wealth of him who, though he was rich in merits of his own, for our sakes became poor, that we through his imputed righteousness might be enriched.

‘And I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are [is] the temple of it;’ or, as we should render it, Jehovah the Almighty God *is* its temple and the Lamb. The verb is not in the plural, the Lord God and the Lamb constitute one and the same nominative singular. *Dominus Deus omnipotens templum ejus est, et Agnus*, (G. & L.) A temple is a place of *worship*, and the worship or service of a temple consists in the offering of sacrifices. The Jews contended that Jerusalem alone was the place where men ought to worship, or to offer sacrifices; that it was the temple at Jerusalem alone that sanctified the offering; for the Jews themselves seem to have had their synagogues or places of meeting for prayer and praise and religious instruction in every country in which any considerable number of them were domiciliated. The pious Jew, if at a distance from the city, worshipped with his face toward Jerusalem, (Dan. vi. 10, Ps. v. 7,) because there the temple was located; the position as an act of faith being equivalent to a being in the temple, and conforming to the petition of Solomon, (1 Kings viii. 30,) in his dedication of that sacred building. The eunuch came from Africa to Jerusalem to worship; that is, to offer certain sacrifices, (Acts viii. 27.) Paul came to Jerusalem for the same purpose, (Acts xxiv. 11;) and the angel was directed, (Rev. xi. 1,) to measure the temple and them that worshipped or sacrificed therein, previous to the passing away of the former things. A holy city without a temple, therefore, must have appeared in ancient times an anomaly. Jesus Christ has given the assurance that the time cometh when God is to be worshipped neither in Jerusalem, neither in the temple at Jerusalem, nor in a certain mountain, but in spirit and in truth: and Paul speaks of the kind of sacrifice called for in this spiritual worship (Rom. xii. 1) as the offering of the whole body of the disciple; an entire dedication of one’s self to the service of God, as the reasonable return to be made for the benefits of salvation. We suppose the worship alluded to by Jesus, and the living sacrifice spoken of by Paul, to constitute the temple service of the New Jerusalem.

The temple, under the Levitical economy, was the medium of approach to God—the way of access; and sacrifices were there offered, because through this medium they were made acceptable to Him to whom the offer-

ing was made. The disciple who comes to God *in Christ*, has a new way of access, a new medium through which his sacrifices and services are made acceptable to God ; a way of which the former was a symbolical representation. What the temple was to the Jews, Christ is to his followers. The Christian, therefore, has no need of a temple, because Christ, the Lamb of God, is his temple : he worships *in Christ*, and the Lamb of God is identic with the Almighty God ; he therefore worships in God—Jehovah himself thus constituting the temple of the economy of grace ; or, being manifested as the temple in the representation of the economy afforded by the new vision of peace. The service or worship of the old temple, as before noticed, consisted of two species of sacrifice, the propitiatory offering, and the thank-offering. The service of the new temple consists of but one of these sacrifices on the part of the believer—Christ having made an offering for sin once for all ; although the merit of that offering ever virtually pleads, or makes continued intercession in the sight of God. In Christ, then, the disciple offers his body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God : holy, because *set apart* in Christ : acceptable, because contemplated in Christ ; and this we presume to be the worship of the Father in spirit and in truth, spoken of by Jesus in his conversation with the woman of Samaria.

§ 503. Under the Levitical dispensation, even the thank-offering and the peace-offering of thanksgiving were to be sprinkled with blood, and that too by the priest, (Lev. vii. 12–14.) So it is only in Christ, and by virtue of his atonement, that even the reasonable sacrifice of the disciple's grateful service can be acceptable to God. In the nature of the case it is only in Christ that the disciple's service can be divested of a mercenary motive ; as, in the nature of the case, it is only in Christ, that the unworthy disciple and his imperfect service can be regarded with complacency by Him, in whose sight even the heavens are unclean. As to be in Christ is to be a new creature, so to be in him is to be in a position enabling the worshipper to *serve* God continually, in the strict sense of the term.

To this peculiar position we may suppose allusion to be made by Jesus, when he speaks of the *temple of his body* ; his material body being the type of his spiritual body, which latter constitutes the spiritual temple of the holy city—a temple of which the glory must infinitely exceed that of all earthly temples. As it is said of it, Haggai ii. 6–9, “For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land ; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come ; and I will fill *this house* with my glory, saith the Lord of Hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts. The glory of *this latter house* shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts : and in this place will I give *peace*, saith the Lord of Hosts.”

The passing away of the first heaven and the first earth of the Apocalypse, has been already considered equivalent to the *shaking* here predicted ; and the coming in of the new heaven and of the new earth, and the exhibition of the New Jerusalem may be taken as equivalents for the coming of the desire of all nations ; that is, for the spiritual manifestation of Christ himself. The display of the riches of the holy city, such as they are exhibited in this revelation, is an evidence that the silver and the gold are the Lord's—the means of redemption are his alone ; and we have in the declaration that the Lord God and the Lamb are the temple of the New Jerusalem, the explanation and fulfilment of the prophecy that the glory of the latter house is greater than that of the former. To this spiritual temple David must have alluded in saying, " Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life ; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever," (Ps. xxiii. 6.) The earthly temple was not then built ; when built its duration was to be but temporary, and it was only in the spiritual house of the Lord that the Psalmist could find a dwelling *forever*.

A like allusion may be found, Ps. cxxii. 1, 2 : " I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand in thy gates, O Jerusalem." To be within the gates of Jerusalem is here apparently an interchangeable expression for being in the house of the Lord. The spiritual temple covers the whole site of the city ; such we may suppose to be the case with the apocalyptic vision of peace. The temple is identic with the city, and the city and the temple are identic with God and the Lamb ; as the bride or wife is identic with the Lamb, and the Lamb is identic with the sovereign God. The accounted identity of the worshipper in the temple with the *medium* of worship, and with the object of worship corresponding with the prayer of Jesus, (John xvii. 21–23 ; ) as it also corresponds with the language of the apostle, (2 Cor. vi. 16,) " For ye are [accounted] the temple of the living God ;" and, (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17,) " Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ? If any man defile (corrupt) the temple of God, [that is, cause it to decay,] him shall God cause to decay ;\* for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

Vs. 23, 24. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb (is) the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

Καὶ ἡ πόλις οὐ χρειάζεσθαι τοῦ ἡλίου οὐδὲ τῆς σελήνης, ἵνα φαίνωσιν αὐτῇ· ἡ γὰρ δόξα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐφώτισεν αὐτήν, καὶ ὁ λύχνος αὐτῆς τὸ ἄρτιον. Καὶ περιπατήσουσι τὰ ἔθνη διὰ τοῦ φωτός αὐτῆς, καὶ οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς φέρουσι τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὴν τιμὴν αὐτῶν εἰς αὐτήν.

\*The verb *q θειῶω* or *q θειῶω*, translated *defile*, is the same in both members of the sentence, and we could not say, if any one defile the temple of God him shall God *defile*.



§ 504. ‘And the city hath no need of the sun,’ &c.—Whatever construction we put upon this passage, its purport is evidently very nearly equivalent to an annunciation of the fulfilment of the prediction Is. lx. 1–3, 19, 20, “Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee; and the Gentiles (nations) shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.” . . . . “The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.”

As we have before intimated, there is a material or natural light, an intellectual or metaphorical light, and a spiritual or analogous light. The last we presume to be the light here alluded to. The material sun, when risen, clothes all objects of nature with its light—all their beauty of appearance depends upon this light; so the imputed righteousness of Christ (the Sun of righteousness) clothes the disciple with a garment or covering of divine perfection, which constitutes all his perfection. The disciple possesses no beauty or glory of his own; without that which is imputed to him, he is, like any object of nature, in a state of perfect darkness—it is colourless, and entirely without beauty. To say that the Sun of righteousness has risen with healing in his wings, is equivalent to saying that Christ is manifested as thus shedding the rays of his own moral perfection upon the pardoned sinner.

Corresponding with this view, the vision of peace (the holy city) exhibits no other righteousness than that of Jehovah; neither has it need to exhibit any other; it has no need to exhibit the light of the sun, or of the moon, for it is resplendent with the righteousness of God himself. The figure of the light of the Sun of righteousness, and that of the reflected light of the moon, may be said to be here dispensed with, because the true light or glory represented by these figures is now fully revealed.

‘The glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.’—Here the Lamb of God and the glory of God are represented as equivalents. If we ask, What is the glory of God? the answer is, the Lamb; and if we ask what the *Lamb* is, the answer is, the *glory of God*. The city (the vision of peace) exhibits no righteousness of any created being. The righteousness of God in *Christ* is its light or glory; as when God promised to show his glory to Moses, “He made his goodness to pass before him;” the goodness of God as manifested in *Christ* constituting the glory of God. This light of divine glory is to the city what the array of fine linen, clean and white, is to the bride, and what the shield or breastplate is to the war-

rior ; for, according to the Psalmist, "The Lord God is [both] a *sun* and shield ; the Lord will give grace and glory," (Ps. lxxxiv. 2.)

Here we have another feature of identity developed. As the city has no need of a temple, because God and the Lamb is the temple of it, so it has no need of light, because the Lamb (the glory of God) is the light thereof.\* The bride or wife (the New Jerusalem) partakes of the glory of her husband, because she is identified with him. The Jerusalem above is the *mother* of the whole community of disciples, (Gal. iv. 26 ;) the children, therefore, may be contemplated as partaking of the same glory. So, (2 Cor. iii. 18,) "We all, with unveiled face, beholding, as in a *mirror*, the glory of the Lord, are changed (as by reflected rays of light) into the same image from glory to glory." As it is said, also, of the perfection of Christ, (John i. 16,) "And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace," *χάρις ἀντὶ χάριτος*, for every grace of Christ corresponding grace being *imputed* to the disciple.

§ 505. 'And the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it.'—The words of *them that are saved* are not found in all editions of the Greek, neither are they in that of Wiclif, where the passage reads, "and folkis shulen walke in the light of it." The word translated *nations* is the same as that sometimes rendered *Gentiles*, and we could hardly say the *Gentiles* of them that are saved. There is, besides, a corresponding passage in the prophets, in which there is no such qualification. "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord ; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it," (Jer. iii. 17.) The words appear to have been interpolated by transcribers, who, governed by a literal construction, supposed the exception to be understood. We might as reasonably qualify the passage quoted in the last section : "The *Gentiles* shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."

We suppose the description in the Apocalypse, as well as the language of these prophecies to express the ultimate ascendancy of the light of revealed truth over every doctrine and principle of doctrine without exception ; this ascendancy resulting from the manifestation of Christ as Jehovah our righteousness, and as such the only author of salvation ; in conformity with the declaration, Phil. ii. 9–11, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The exhibition of the

\* The Lamb may be considered the instrument or medium (*λῆχος*) through which the light or glory is exhibited, as it is expressed in the Wiclif version, "the clerete of God schal ligthe it: and the Lamb is the lanterne of it ;" or, according to the Rheims ed., "the glorie of God hath illuminated it, and the Lambe is the lampe thereof."

economy of grace, when completed, will be like that of a city set upon a hill: its light or glory cannot be hid—it will manifest that glory to all, whether all rejoice in the light or not.

At the period now in contemplation, the overcoming principle (*ὁ νικῶν*) is to be supposed in full power, *ruling the nations with a rod of iron*. All things (principles) are manifested to succumb and to be subordinate to this rule, from the power of which there is no escape. The law goes forth out of Zion, and the word of God from Jerusalem, (Micah iv. 2.) Through this instrumentality the sovereign will and purpose of the Most High is made known; for which reason we may presume it to be predicted (Jer. iii. 17) that Jerusalem shall be called *the throne of the Lord*. To the same instrumentality allusion seems to be made, Is. lxii. 1, 2: “For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth; and the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory.” Here the righteousness of Jerusalem or of Zion, is put for the light of the apocalyptic city, and the lamp for the instrument of light, the medium of righteousness—the *lantern* of Wiclif’s version. Whether righteousness, or light, or glory, however, they are in fact all and each of them of the Lord, (Is. liv. 17.)

‘And the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.’—Not political or military glory. Louis XIV., Frederick of Prussia, Charlemagne, Alexander the Great, or Nebuchadnezzar, could bring no glory or honour into the holy city, the new Jerusalem, the vision of peace. We have before noticed that the term rendered *kings* was sometimes applied, amongst the Greeks, to those who presided in religious matters; but we do not suppose this to be ecclesiastical glory any more than political. We suppose these kings or chiefs to represent leading principles of religious systems or doctrines: the glory and honour of which are to be manifested to be subordinate, and perhaps in some sense auxiliary to the glory and honour of the new Jerusalem. As it is said of the elements or principles of the legal dispensation, all of which may be contemplated as bringing their glory and honour to augment the triumph of the economy of grace, “If the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.” (2 Cor. iii. 9–11.)

The same may be said of the glory of the elements of the literal construction, as compared with those of the spiritual interpretation: for, as the apostle intimates in connection with the passage just quoted, (v. 6,) the difference is not merely between the New Testament and the Old Testament, but also between the spirit of the New Testament and the *letter*, or



literal understanding of it; "For the letter," he adds, "killeth, but the spirit giveth life,"—thus classing the elements of the *letter* of the New Testament with those of the Mosaical dispensation, both having their glory, but a glory far exceeded by the spirit of the New Testament dispensation; which spirit he afterwards terms the ministration of *justification*, as opposed to the ministration of condemnation.

The leading elements of these two inferior "ministrations" we suppose to be represented by the *kings of the earth*. Whatever their honour or glory be, it goes to augment, but does not come into competition with, the glory of the economy of grace. This, also, is a result of the new state of things, or of the views presented by the new heaven and the new earth. Prior to the passing away of the former things, the nations (Gentiles) in the four quarters of the earth were led astray by the accuser, and under his conduct compassed the camp of the saints and the beloved city in battle array; as the kings of the earth had previously been marshalled by the beast and false prophet against the Word of God. Now, all things being made new, the same elements apparently walk in the light of the city, once the object of their hostile efforts, and bring their glory and honour into it. The difference is nearly parallel with that between the elements of the law rightly used in bringing the disciple to Christ, and the same elements perverted to the establishment of the kingdom of *self*, in opposition to the economy of a free salvation.

Vs. 25-27. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither (whatsoever) worketh abomination, or (maketh) a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Καὶ οἱ πυλῶνες αὐτῆς οὐ μὴ κλεισθῶσιν ἡμέρας (νῦν γὰρ οὐκ ἔσται ἐκεῖ,) καὶ ὁῶσιν τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὴν τιμὴν τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰς αὐτήν. Καὶ οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθῃ εἰς αὐτήν πᾶν κοινὸν καὶ ποιοῦν βδέλυγμα καὶ ψεῦδος, εἰ μὴ οἱ γεγραμμένοι ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἀρνίου.

§ 506. 'And the gates of it shall not be shut,' &c.; or, as the original implies, 'shall not be *locked* at all.—The apocalyptic city (vision of peace) being an exhibition of the plan of salvation, to open the gates of the city is to unfold the mysterious features of this plan,—to exhibit all the principles belonging to it. Hitherto the gates have been *locked*, or partially so; the mystery has been hidden from the foundation of the world, and it is not yet fully revealed. The prophet Daniel was told to shut up the words revealed to him, and to seal the book to the time of the end. In the interim, it was added, "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Now, at the period of this new state of things, the time of the end is supposed to have arrived; the *words* revealed to Daniel are to be opened; the mystery of the gospel is to be fully unfolded, and the book containing this

mystery is to be contemplated as unsealed ; not only so, the mystery henceforth is to remain open, and that continually and forever.

There is no night there, and the gates are not shut at all by day, consequently they are always open.\* At the epoch contemplated in this passage, the running *to and fro*, spoken of in the vision of Daniel, may be supposed to be ended—the knowledge of the truth has increased. This knowledge exhibits the new Jerusalem as clothed or covered with the light, or glory, or righteousness of Jehovah. Such a vision of the divine plan of redemption, as is exhibited to the spiritual understanding in this vision of the new Jerusalem, may be supposed to comprehend all knowledge for which the running *to and fro* was designed. The book spoken of by Daniel is therefore no longer to be sealed ; and, corresponding with this, the gates of the city are no longer to be locked.

Night is a season of darkness—of absence of light—and light we take to be, in typical language, an interchangeable term for *righteousness*. To be in the night, or in darkness, is to be divested of righteousness—equivalent to a position out of Christ ; as to be in Christ is equivalent to being in the light. Night is also the season of danger—the thief and the robber availing themselves of the darkness to accomplish their purposes ; so, to be out of Christ, deprived of his imputed righteousness, is to be in a position of peculiar peril—exposed to the attacks of the legal adversary. But the righteousness of God and the Lamb constitutes the light of the holy city, and this perpetually and without cessation. Here, therefore, there is no season of darkness or of danger ; the adversary is at no moment to be feared, and consequently, under the protection of such *light* no further precaution is necessary. This applies both to the position of the disciple, and to the exhibition of the plan of salvation ; as in the latter no accusing principle can introduce itself or find access, so long as the imputed righteousness of Jehovah is its element of protection.

‘ And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.’—That is, the kings spoken of in the twenty-fourth verse. They are to bring their own honour and glory and also the honour and glory of the nations into the holy city. We give the same construction to this expression as to the preceding ones of a like character. It is not to be imagined that Great Britain or France in modern times, or Rome, or Babylon, or the kingdom of the Medes and Persians, could confer honour upon, or bring honour into, the new Jerusalem the heavenly city ; still less could they bring honour or glory into the covenant of grace. All *powers of the earth* we suppose to repre-

\* The expression *by day* (ἡμέρας) probably applies to the whole twenty-four hours, and is equivalent to the declaration, that the gates are never shut or locked. The gates of fortified towns are opened *of course* during the day, but they are locked at night ; here there is no night, and for that reason the gates are never locked.

sent powers of salvation similar to those we have just noticed of the legal and literal ministrations. These, as compared with the spiritual economy, or ministration of the Spirit, have no glory, by reason of the glory that excelleth. But without this comparison, they have a certain glory, as Moses, who was obliged to veil his face before the children of Israel, (2 Cor. iii. 7,) which, however, is to be manifested to be subordinate to that of the new dispensation. This clause would appear to contain almost an unnecessary repetition, were it not for its connection, as we shall see, with the subsequent verse.

§ 507. ‘And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth,’ (maketh common,) &c.—The Greek conjunction καὶ, translated *and* here, may sometimes be rendered disjunctively *but*, and such would seem to be the proper reading in this passage. The gates of the city are to remain open continually, and the kings of the earth are to bring their honour and glory and the honour and glory of the nations into it; *but* there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth. The honour and glory of the nations are brought into the city, but not as merchandise; there is nothing of the commercial character about the new Jerusalem—no mercenary principle is admitted into it. The kings of the nations bring their tribute, as acknowledgments of the supremacy of the city. As the queen of Sheba, with a very great train, brought her *gifts* to king Solomon, (1 Kings x. 2, 10,) so it is said of the new Jerusalem prophetically, (Is. lx. 5,) “The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee, and the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually: they shall not be shut day nor night, that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.” Thus all the elements of the earthly system, all the elements of the legal dispensation, and of the ministration of the letter of the New Testament, shall co-operate in bringing honour and glory into the exhibition (or vision) of God’s plan of redemption; nevertheless, we may add, nothing shall be admitted, no element or principle, which defileth, or maketh a lie, or worketh abomination.

Πᾶρ κοινοῦν, any thing *making* common, or unclean, according to the Greek editions followed by our English version; or, πᾶν κοινόν, any thing common, according to other editions. We think the first probably the more correct, as it is connected with the verb κοινοῦν, following immediately after it. The difference, however, is not material. Πᾶν, the neuter of πᾶς, translated any *thing* in this passage, is said to be sometimes put abstractly for the masculine, (Rob. Lex. 558;) but we do not think there is any occasion for supposing that to be the case here. The whole connection



shows that *things*, principles, or elements of doctrine are alluded to, and not human beings. Even if the masculine were used, we should take it as a personification, or as relating to *οἱ λόγοι*, sayings, or doctrines, understood.

To defile, in the Scripture sense, is to make common, as the opposite of setting apart, consecrating, or sanctifying. The utensils appropriated to the temple service were *set apart*; the same description of utensils employed for ordinary purposes were *common*. To apply the vessels of the temple service to an ordinary use was to *defile* them, or make them common and unclean. The disciple set apart in Christ in God's account is sanctified; out of Christ, he is *common* or unclean;\* and every doctrine tending to place him in such a position, (out of Christ,) is a doctrine that defileth, or that renders common. Corresponding with this, we suppose every element of doctrine peculiar to the economy of grace, or permitted to appear so, in the vision of that economy, must be *set apart* in God's account; and, as such, it must be something of which Christ constitutes the sanctifying element. Every principle of the economy of grace must be something comprehended in the idea that Christ is the only way of access to God; while, on the contrary, any doctrine tending to introduce principles of an opposite character, must be a doctrine defiling or making common; or if it be a principle or pretension to merit, coming in competition with the merits of Christ, it is an unclean or common principle, and for that reason cannot be admitted into an exhibition of the economy of grace.

§ 508. 'Neither working abomination.'—The abominable are represented in the eighth verse of this chapter as destined to be cast into the lake of fire; but here it is not merely the abominable, or the abomination, but whatever causeth or maketh abomination. We have already had occasion to enlarge upon this term, (§ 385,) and have shown the probability of its applying particularly to *mixed* views of doctrine; an adulteration of Christian faith; a mixture of the hypocrisy, and lukewarmness, and self-righteousness repeatedly spoken of in the Scriptures as peculiarly hateful to the Searcher of hearts. We suppose a thing working abomination, in the apocalyptic sense of the term, to be a doctrine or a principle of doctrine, tending to represent the salvation of the sinner partly as a work of God, and partly as the work of man. In this respect such principles differ from those belonging to the class of making common or defiling; as these last may be said to teach a way of salvation entirely independent of the merits

\* Every doctrine representing man as being holy or sanctified, by virtue of some quality in himself, is an unclean or defiling doctrine. To such impurity, and purity of views in matters of faith, allusion appears to be made, Titus i. 15, "To the clean [pure] all things are clean, but to the defiled [spotted, *μεμιασμένοις*] and unbelieving there is nothing clean, but [both] their understandings and their consciences are defiled," spotted,—*μεμλάνται αὐτῶν καὶ ἡ νοῦς καὶ ἡ συνείδησις*.

of Christ ; while those working abomination profess to place the disciple in a position of dependence upon Christ, when, in effect, they inculcate his dependence upon a righteousness of his own. Doctrines of this character professedly ascribe the glory of redemption to God, while they really assume that glory for man—a species of robbery depriving God of the honour, and worship or service due to him, under pretence of great zeal for holiness, and probably for the law. Such robbery or *sacrilege* is apparently alluded to Rom. ii. 22 : *Thou that abominatest idols, dost thou rob temples ?* ὁ βδελυσσόμενος τὰ εἰδωλα ἱεροσυλεῖς. The inconsistency pointed out by the apostle being that of a professed jealousy for the worship of God, where there is virtually an effort to deprive him of that glory *as a Redeemer* which he has especially declared he will not give to another. Doctrines of this tendency are wholly inadmissible in an exhibition of the divine plan of redemption, and for that reason are not allowed to enter the gates of the heavenly city.

‘Or maketh a lie.’—The word *maketh* is supplied by our translators ; but if it were not, it is evidently understood in connection with the preceding expression. It is not merely the lie, but whatever has a tendency to make a lie, that is excluded ; any principle tending to a false doctrine. We have thus three classes of prohibited objects ; the last of a general character applying to all false doctrinal principles, or to any misinterpretation, or that which occasions any of these. The two first classes must necessarily be included in the third, but this last may comprehend varieties of error not peculiar to the other two.

The apostle Paul speaks expressly, Rom. i. 25, of those who changed the truth of God into a *lie*, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator—a perversion working abomination, as well as falsehood, as appears from the vices enumerated by the apostle, apparently by way of illustrating the errors in contemplation ; that is, the errors of self-righteousness—the idolatry of self, by which the creature is, in the strict sense of the term, worshipped and served more than the Creator. But besides this, all doctrines tending virtually to the denial of Jesus as the Christ, or tending to reject his righteousness, or to deny the sinfulness of man, or to undermine the truths of the gospel, may be denominated things making a lie ; as it is said, (1 John iii. 21,) “ Ye know that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ ? ” 1 John i. 6, 8 : “ If we say we have fellowship with him, (Christ,) and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.” “ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” “ He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” So, 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2, “ In the latter times, there shall be some giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy,” or in the

hypocrisy of false speaking. These seducing spirits and doctrines (doctrinal principles) we suppose to be, apocalyptically, the things *making a lie*, none of which can be admitted into the heavenly vision of peace.

§ 509. ‘But they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.’—This clause is to be taken in connection with the preceding portion of the verse: “There shall not enter into the city any *thing* that maketh common, any *thing* that worketh abomination, or any *thing* that maketh a lie; but only those *things* whice are written in the Lamb’s book of life. Such, at least, is our construction of the passage—corresponding with our former remarks upon the contents of this book of life, (§ § 87, 305.) The pronoun, translated *they which*, is masculine, although the pronoun rendered *any thing* in the first clause of the sentence, is neuter; but as we have remarked in respect to *τίς*, (§ 461,) the names of *things* in the Greek language may be masculine or feminine as well as those of rational beings. We have only to suppose the masculine plural *οἱ* to relate to the plural noun *λόγοι* (words, sayings, &c.) and the latter part of the sentence is in conformity with the first part, notwithstanding the difference of gender.

Keeping the city in view as a representation of the divine arrangement of principles, constituting the economy of salvation, we learn from the passage, that although all principles and doctrines of all systems are to be rendered manifestly subservient to the heavenly system, bringing their honour and glory as a tribute into it, there is to be no admittance of any doctrine comprehended in the three prohibited classes; but, on the contrary, only the words, sayings, or doctrinal elements to be found in the Lamb’s book of life; which book of life (written from the foundation of the world) we suppose to be the eternal purpose of God with respect to the whole work of man’s salvation. That is, the Lamb’s book of life is, *in effect*, identic with that *διαθήκη*, or economy of redemption, of which the new Jerusalem is a representation. The true vision of peace exhibits no other elements than those to be found in the book; and the elements or principles in the book are exhibited in the new or heavenly vision of peace.

The apostle Paul, alluding to the change of dispensations depicted in this Apocalypse, quotes the words of the Spirit, Ps. xl. 7, as the declaration of Christ himself: “Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God,” (Heb. x. 7–9.) When the Psalm referred to was composed, the only sacred books extant were those of Moses, Job, Joshua, and Samuel; we do not suppose either of these to be the volume spoken of. We suppose it to be the purpose of the divine mind figuratively designated as a book, or as the volume of the book—God’s purpose or plan of salvation written, so to speak, before the creation of the world. This book must necessarily contain all the elements of doctrine, and all the principles pertaining to the life, and offices, and character, and



work of Christ, as the Saviour of the world. It may be denominated the book of the life of the Lamb, which corresponds precisely with the Greek expression rendered in our common version, "The Lamb's book of life;" as we have it here, *οἱ γεγραμμένοι ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἀρνίου*.

If the holy city comprehend all that is contained in the Lamb's book of life, and nothing else, and if the *wife* of the Lamb be identic with the Lamb; then the Lamb, the new Jerusalem, and the divine purpose of salvation, are identic—different appellations of the same means of salvation, and different modes of presenting the same means to our contemplation.

Christ, the Lamb of God,\* is the word of God made flesh. The word of God is the eternal purpose of God, and the eternal purpose of God (in relation to the work of salvation) is the book of life—the Lamb's book of life. So, if the elements of the economy of salvation written in this book of life, and exhibited in the vision of peace, (the new Jerusalem,) be the same as the elements of salvation in Christ; to give disciples the assurance that the means of their eternal life are to be found either in the book of life, or in the economy (covenant) represented by the heavenly Jerusalem, is equivalent to the assurance of the apostle, (Col. iii. 3,) "Your life is hid with Christ in God." So, on the other hand, the declaration that nothing shall enter into the city except it be found in the book of life, is equivalent to the declaration that no element of doctrine can find admittance into a *true* exhibition of the economy of grace, except it be consistent with the whole tenor of the gospel, showing Christ (God manifest in the flesh) to be the only Saviour.†

\* The Lamb of *God*, so styled, we apprehend, in contradistinction to the lamb of *man*,—the ritual lamb of the passover, and of the Levitical sacrifices; the last being a lamb of man's providing, while the first is that of God's providing—a distinction apparently alluded to by John Baptist, in directing the attention of his countrymen to Jesus, "Behold the Lamb of *God*." Uttered as this was to Jews, with whom the idea of the annual and daily sacrifices of a *lamb* was perfectly familiar, the distinction must have been as readily perceptible to the hearers as to the speaker. Thesa me association of ideas we think is to be carried in the mind throughout the reading of the New Testament, wherever this appellation is given to the Saviour.

† We have already assigned a reason (§ 480) for proceeding immediately from the close of this chapter to the next, as we propose to do, without the intervention of any retrospective remarks in this place.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## VISION OF THE BRIDE, THE LAMB'S WIFE.—THE HOLY JERUSALEM.—(CONTINUED.)

Vs. 1, 2. And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, (was there) the tree of life, which bare twelve (manner of) fruits, (and) yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree (were) for the healing of the nations.

Καὶ ἔδειξέ μοι ποταμὸν ὕδατος ζωῆς λαμπρὸν ὡς κρύσταλλον, ἐκπορευόμενον ἐκ τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου. Ἐν μέσῳ τῆς πλατείας αὐτῆς καὶ τοῦ ποταμοῦ ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐκεῖθεν ξύλον ζωῆς, ποιοῦν καρποὺς δώδεκα, κατὰ μῆνα ἕκαστον ἀποδοῦν τὸν καρπὸν αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὰ φύλλα τοῦ ξύλου εἰς θεραπείαν τῶν ἐθνῶν.

§ 510. 'AND he showed me.'—Although this is the beginning of a chapter, the narrative should be regarded as an unbroken continuation of the description commenced in the preceding chapter. The apostle has been shown the walls of the city, with their foundations or bastions, its gates, its spiritual temple, its street: the materials of its various structures have been pointed out to him; the general resplendent appearance of the city has been noticed; even the manner in which it is lighted has been set forth, together with the rules of admission and exclusion at the gates. He is now shown the supply of water—a supply equally indispensable for purification and for sustenance; the surety and abundance of such supply being as necessary to a fortress or fortified city, as its walls and bulwarks.

'A pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal.'—The word translated pure (*καθαρόν*) is not met with in all editions of the Greek. Some transcribers may have considered it redundant, as the river could hardly be *clear as crystal* if the water were not pure. We should prefer, however, retaining it, as the word rendered *clear* (*λαμπρόν*) refers rather to the shining or brilliant quality of the water than to its purity, while the term *καθαρόν* directs our attention to the pure and white linen of the saints,—to the fine linen, clean and white, of the bride; affording the assurance that, as the robe is perfectly free from spot or stain, so the water of this stream is perfectly free from any foreign substance: the atonement of Christ, as well as his righteousness, possessing pre-eminently this peculiar quality of freedom from admixture.

The importance of water can be fully appreciated only by those who have suffered from the want of it. In countries in the neighborhood of Palestine, the figure of a full supply of the element strikes the mind with peculiar force. Lot was governed in his choice of the plain of Jordan by the consideration that the country was *well watered*. Babylon too had its river, which also ran through the midst of the city; but its source was out of the city, so that the supply might be cut off by an invading enemy, as eventually was the case. The holy city, on the contrary, has the *source* of the river within itself, for the stream proceeded out of the throne of God and of the Lamb; and we learn from the third verse of the chapter that this throne was in the city, and apparently is ever to remain there. It is not in the power of the adversary to intercept the supply of this life-giving stream—the water of life, so denominated because it is the indispensable means of eternal life,—the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, (Zech. xiii. 1,) and the river the streams whereof, it is said, (Ps. xli. 4,) shall make glad the city of our God: the source of the river, from the throne in the midst the city, corresponding with the assurance of Jesus, “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life,” (John iv. 14.)

§ 511. The source whence the stream proceeds affords a guarantee of its purity and power; at the same time it gives a certain character to the river, not otherwise to be possessed. The throne of God and the Lamb: not two thrones, but one throne; the same, no doubt, as the great white throne, (§ 455.) God and the Lamb are now manifested as the one Almighty Sovereign, both occupying the same *seat*; the one represented as occupying the seat of the other, according to the mode of manifestation.

The throne of a sovereign exhibits its occupant as a sovereign. The *righteousness* of God whereby he saves the objects of his mercy, manifests his sovereignty, more especially as the imputation of this righteousness is a free gift or grace; wherefore it is that the same throne or seat is also termed the throne of *grace*. It is therefore from this divine righteousness imputable to the disciple through free and sovereign grace, that the atoning means of eternal life (the fountain opened for the washing away of sin and uncleanness) proceeds. So heaven is said (Heb. iv. 16) to be the throne of God; and it is so in a spiritual sense, because the revelation, symbolically spoken of as *heaven*, sets forth the same free and sovereign exercise of divine power and mercy as that comprehended under the figure of a throne of grace. For this reason it is said of Jerusalem, “She shall be called the throne of God,” exhibiting also as she does, in this Apocalypse, the same arrangement of sovereign grace. Corresponding with this, it was said, (Rev. vii. 17,) “The Lamb *in the midst* of the throne shall lead them unto



living fountains of waters," &c. The *revelation* had not then so far progressed as to show the Lamb to be an occupant of the throne. Now, we see that the throne is his ; and that to be in the midst of the throne or seat, is to be *on* the seat ; and that the way in which the Lamb leads his followers to living fountains of water, is by opening for them this supply of the pure water of life from the throne of grace. The element of ablution now exhibited is not something in addition to what has been before spoken of, it is only the same thing represented under a different figure.

The apostle alluded to this river of life, this atoning provision from the fountain of sovereign grace, at the opening of the book, (Rev. i. 5,) in ascribing glory and dominion "to him that has washed us from our sins in his own blood." Paul alluded to it in speaking of those that are "washed and sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," (1 Cor. vi. 11.) The Psalmist had it in view in speaking of the blessedness of those whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sins are covered ; and the prophet, in speaking of him who was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities ; and Jehovah himself alluded to it in the declaration, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions as a cloud, and as a thick cloud thy sins ;" and reference is made to the same propitiatory provision of grace alone, in the declaration of him who sat upon the throne, (Rev. xxi. 6,) "I will give to him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."

It was in contemplation of the same sovereign mercy, that the Psalmist exclaimed, "How *precious* is thy loving kindness, O God ! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them *drink of the river of thy pleasures* ; for with thee is the fountain of life : in thy light shall they see light." Such is the river of the holy city ; the atonement of Christ proceeding from the element of sovereign grace, pure and unmixed ; for it admits of no amalgamation with a human merit, or with any earthly means of propitiation. Such, too, we may say, was the original purport of the revelation of divine mercy ; but this revelation was perverted by misrepresentations, and this perversion involved the loss of that peace which an understanding of the truth only is able to give. As it was said by the mouth of the prophet, "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments ! then had thy peace been as a *river*, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea," (Is. xlviii. 18.)

§ 512. 'In the midst of the street of it ;' that is, the street of the *city*, the main subject of description, and the subject of the last verse of the preceding chapter. Contemplating the origin of all cities and towns as a single street, we may take the term *street* (ἡ πλατεῖα) to be put here for the whole area of the city—the whole city enjoyed the benefits afforded by the river.

‘And on either side of the river, the tree of life.’—On both sides of the river here and there, the tree of life was to be found—the tree in the singular being put for the *genus*. Trees of this single kind were to be seen in every part of the city. The river ran through every street; and wherever the river ran, the tree of life was to be met with: the tree of life and the river of life being in fact two different figures of the same means of eternal life. Even as figures we may say the tree could not flourish without the river, (Ps. i. 3.)

This must be the tree of life spoken of Rev. ii. 7; “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” This tree is now spoken of as in the midst of the new Jerusalem; consequently the holy city and the paradise of God (the spiritual paradise) must be identic—different figures of the same economy of grace; this tree, or wood of life, representing the cross of Christ, (§ 47,) and the first paradise (§ 48) representing a position nearly equivalent with that afforded by the economy of grace. In the first, however, man was not permitted, after having tasted of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, to approach the tree of life, while, in the second, this tree is expressly provided for him. The difference illustrates the difference of the two positions, both as matters of fact and as matters of faith. Under the law, and dependent upon his own merits, it is impossible for man to participate in the vicarious sacrifice of Christ; so, as a matter of faith, while the disciple believes himself under the law, and dependent upon his own merits, he cannot place his trust in the atonement of Christ.

‘Which bear twelve manner of fruits.’—Viewing the tree of life as the cross of Christ, we may judge, by what the cross bore, of the fruit of the tree. The blood of the *cross* is put for the atonement of Christ, or the means of reconciliation with God, (Col. i. 20.) Either the atonement itself, or the effect of it, (peace with God,) may be contemplated as the fruit of the tree of life. So (Col. ii. 14) the nailing of the hand-writing of ordinances to the cross is spoken of, figuratively, as the fulfilment of the requisitions of the law by Christ in behalf of the sinner—(see also Eph. ii. 15, 16.) We may consider the cross a symbol of the divine *purpose*, according to which Christ became the propitiation for sin, and the substitute for the sinner. This *purpose* may be therefore termed the tree or wood, (*ξύλον*,) and Christ himself (his merits) as the fruit. The tree receives its character from its fruit, and it is the offering upon the cross which makes that tree, or the divine purpose represented by it, a *tree of life*.

We have thus a general idea of the fruit of the tree, but we have still to understand how this *fruit* can be represented as of twelve different species; or, according to the Greek, *twelve fruits*. Here we call to mind that the apocalyptic paradise, or holy city, is not put for the economy of grace itself,

it is a picture or representation of it. The tree of life in the midst of the city is not put for the divine purpose itself, but for a representation of that purpose ; and the various fruits of this tree are not put for various merits of Christ, (as the means of salvation,) but for various representations or modes of exhibiting the same merits ; the fruits of the tree corresponding in character, as in number, with the garnishing of the foundations of the wall, and with the gates of pearl. As the four branches of one river, enumerated in the description of the first paradise, (Gen. ii. 10,) may be symbolical of four modes in which the same spiritual means of ablution, and of eternal life, are spoken of in Scripture, (water, wine, blood, and propitiation or atonement,) so we may suppose the twelve fruits of this tree to represent twelve modes of speaking of the same means of justification, or of those imputed merits through which the disciple obtains, besides the pardon of his sins and his escape from punishment, a title to eternal happiness.

§ 513. The fruit of a tree, in scriptural language, is a general expression for *food*, solid food or meat, as distinguished from a mere article of drink ; as in the garden of Eden, besides its abundant provision of water, there was to be found every tree good for *food*, and as, in a vision of Ezekiel, bearing a striking resemblance to this portion of the Apocalypse, after having described a stream issuing from under the threshold of the house of the Lord, which gradually became a great river, giving life and fertility wherever its waters approached, it is added, “ And by the river, upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for *meat*, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed : it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary ; and the fruit thereof shall be for *meat*, and the leaf thereof for *medicine*,” (Ezek. xlvii. 1–12.)

We have had a description of the provisions for the security and comfortable dwelling of the inhabitants of the new Jerusalem, but nothing has yet been said of the article of food. We have been informed respecting their drink, we now come to a description of their meat. It is under this head that we have, as suggested, an allusion to twelve different modes in which the merits of Christ are figuratively spoken of in Scripture as the requisite means of eternal life ; for, although the atonement of Christ is sufficient to save the sinner from punishment, something more is requisite to entitle him to eternal happiness ; and this *something more*, is to be found in the imputed merits or righteousness of Christ. As we may say of a human being, a supply of wholesome drink would be sufficient to preserve him from perishing, but he requires solid food to enable him to enjoy life. Corresponding with this, the benefits derived from the death of Christ are represented in the communion of the last supper, by an *edible* as well as a *potable* element of sustenance.



The flesh of the firstling of the flock, offered by Abel, the flesh of the paschal lamb, the unleavened bread, the manna, the quails, the shew-bread of twelve cakes, the flesh of the daily sacrifice, the wheat, the milk, or the rich pastures\* of the promised land, the honey from the rock, the bread of the eucharist, and the material flesh of Christ, severally represent, as we apprehend, the same fruit of the tree of life—so many figures of the same spiritual meat or food spoken of in this passage of the Apocalypse as twelve monthly fruits. These figures are susceptible no doubt of a different classification or arrangement, and for some of them other figures may be substituted. Our design is rather to suggest the kind of construction to be given to the passage, than to attempt a precise interpretation of it.

‘And yielded her fruit every month.’—That is, continually and perpetually. As a plant bearing twelve varieties of flowers, and having one of these varieties in bloom every month, must be always in blossom throughout the year, Christ and his cross, (the tree of life,) as revealed in the Scriptures, through the medium of twelve modes of illustration, afford to the spiritual understanding a continual and perpetual exhibition of the means of eternal life peculiar to the economy of grace—the means not merely of forgiveness, but more especially of obtaining the enjoyment of eternal happiness.

We do not know that there is occasion for carrying this analysis further, but as the number of the fruits multiplied by the number of the months would produce the mystic number *one hundred and forty-four*, this pecu-

\* The prominent idea to be associated with the figure of *pastures*, as employed Ps. xxiii. 2, we take to be rather that of the position of *rest* than that of a supply of food. “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want;” because he feeds me with the bread of life. “He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;” as their position in Christ, and the casting of their burthen upon the Lord, gives to those who have been labouring to establish a righteousness of their own a state of *rest*. “He leadeth me beside the *still waters*,” (the opposite of those waters elsewhere spoken of by the Psalmist as coming over his soul.) by bringing me to the fountain or river of life. “He restoreth my soul,” by making me a *new creature* in Christ. “He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness,” by bringing me into his own way of justification; and this, it is added, he does for his name’s sake; that is, for his own glory.

With these views the disciple “fears no evil,” although contemplating all the terrors of the law, as in the valley of the shadow of death; for there is no condemnation to them that are thus in Christ Jesus. With these views he finds himself as a guest at the royal table, admitted in the presence and in despite of his accusers, to eat and drink with his sovereign; *set apart* in Christ, and thus enjoying the security peculiar to the *Lord’s anointed*.

We have indulged in an analysis of this short psalm, because, in our apprehension, it affords a specimen of the correspondence of the figures of the Old Testament with those of the New. Well might the Singer of Israel close this poetical effusion with the exclamation, “Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

liarity may point out the illustration, afforded by the fruits of this tree of life, to be a result of the combined testimony of the Old and New Testament revelations—the twelve apostles and the twelve tribes. The names of the months, and the peculiar characteristics of their respective seasons, may also throw some further light upon the character of these twelve fruits ; but we do not venture upon these inquiries at present.

§ 514. ‘ And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.’ —So it was said of the tree seen in the vision of Ezekiel, “ The fruit thereof shall be for *meat*, and the leaf thereof for *medicine*.” We were told in the preceding chapter, (Rev. xxi. 4,) that under the new state of things there is to be no pain, no death, no sorrow nor crying ; and here we have the reason given for it—that whatever cause of pain or death there may be, or may have been, the antidote is now immediately at hand. As it was said of the redeemed, Rev. vii. 16, “ They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat,” (that is, oppressively ;) and for this we have here also the reason—the supply of food is ever at hand, the fruit of the tree of life is unceasingly within reach ; and if there be no suffering from the light or heat of the sun, it is because the leaves of the tree of life afford ample protection.

The word rendered healing, expresses the attendance and kind offices of the physician, as well as the good effects of his medicine, (Rob. Lex. 302 ;) so the leaves of the tree of life afford relief by their shade as well as by their medical qualities. Corresponding with this idea it is said, Ps. cxxi. 5, “ The Lord is thy *shade* upon thy right hand ;” Ps. xci. 1, 2, “ He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the *shadow* of the Almighty ;” Is. xxxii. 2, “ A man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the *shadow* of a great rock in a weary land.” These allusions to Christ and to the protecting shadow of his merits, accord with his character as the true Physician, and with that of his propitiation as the true balm of Gilead. It can be to no other than this remedy for the guilt of sin that David alludes in his petition, Ps. xli. 4, “ *Heal* my soul, for I have sinned against thee,” a healing process explained by the prophet in his prediction of Christ, (Is. liii. 3,) “ He was bruised for our iniquities, and with his stripes we are *healed*.” The leaf of the tree of life thus bears the same relation to the fruit as the element of water bears to the figure afforded by an article of food. The leaf of the tree, and the river of the water of life, both direct our attention to the same propitiatory provision. In fact, the fruit and the leaf owe their virtue to the living stream by the sides of which the tree is planted ; for which reason the leaf of the tree described by the prophet, it is said, (Ezek. xlvii. 12,) *shall not fade*, or wither : an important consideration to those depending upon its shade.

What is particularly remarkable of this apocalyptic tree, however, is that its leaves are for the healing of the *nations*, (the Gentiles.) Of the holy Jerusalem the prophet says, (Is. xxxiii. 20-24,) "The inhabitant shall no more say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." And this we may suppose is attributable to their participation of the leaves of the tree of life; for if these leaves be for the healing of the nations, much more must they insure health to the inhabitants of the city. In both cases, however, the healing must be of the same character—it consists in forgiveness. The nations, (Gentiles,) as distinguished from the inhabitants, may be contemplated as brought to the city, within the influence of the tree of life, to be healed, or to be forgiven. As it was said of the *strangers* to whom the apostle Peter addressed his first epistle, speaking of them as *healed* by the stripes of him who bore our sins in his own body on the tree, "For ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls," (1 Peter ii. 25;) and as Paul speaks of the Ephesians, by nature Gentiles, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, once strangers and afar off, but now *brought nigh* by the blood of Christ—the position of the Gentile, of the Israelite estranged from his own land, and of the sheep gone astray, being apparently nearly equivalent figures. Apocalyptically, we suppose the effect of the propitiatory elements represented by the leaves of the tree of life, upon the legal or self-righteous elements spoken of as the nations, to be analogous to this *bringing nigh* of Gentile converts by the blood of Christ. Legal elements, independent of their relation to the economy of redemption, are hostile to the economy of grace, as, under the conduct of the accuser, they were led on to the attack of the beloved city; but the same elements leading to conviction of sin, and taken in connection with the divine plan of atonement, are reconciled to the sovereign principle of salvation by grace, and may be thus represented as *healed* by the leaves of the tree of life. The first Gentile state is such as it appears under the old order of things; the second, or healed state, is such as is exhibited on the coming in of the new heaven and new earth, and the consequent manifestation of the new Jerusalem, (the new vision of peace.)

Vs. 3, 4. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it: and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name (shall be) in their foreheads.

Καὶ πᾶν κατάθεμα οὐκ ἔστι ἐν· καὶ ὁ θρόνος τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀρνίου ἐν αὐτῇ ἔσται, καὶ οἱ δοῦλοι αὐτοῦ λατρεύσουσιν αὐτῷ· καὶ ὄψονται τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν μετώπων αὐτῶν.

§ 515. 'And there shall be no more curse.'—Legal elements are here deprived of their power; "For as many as are of the works of the law,



(ἐξ ἔργων νόμου,\*) are under the curse ; for it is written," says Paul, Gal. iii. 10, "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." "Behold, I set before you this day," said Moses, "a blessing and a curse ; a blessing if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, and a curse if ye will not obey," (Deut. xi. 26-28.)

Such was the *condition* upon which the promised inheritance was granted to the people of Israel, and upon which possession of the land was to be retained. We have supposed that land, flowing with milk and honey, to represent the rich abundance of the merits of Christ, the inheritance of the saints. There is, however, this difference : the inheritance of the literal Canaan was *conditional* ; it depended upon an exact fulfilment of the law, on the part of those to whom the grant was made ;—the inheritance of the spiritual Canaan is a free gift. The possession of the one necessarily involved the peril of the curse ; in the possession of the other, there is no such peril. The position of the Israelites in the land of promise, corresponded with that of our first parents in Paradise ; obedience was the *condition* of enjoyment. The result was the same in both cases—the condition was not observed, the penalty of the curse was incurred, and the enjoyment forfeited.

Here, it may be said, two trials of human ability were typically made ; one of man generally, the other of the chosen people of God. By both of these experiments we are taught that a position under the law is necessarily a position involving the curse. By the works of the law no flesh can be justified,—man cannot obtain or retain possession of eternal life by his own fulfilment of the law. The fault was not in the garden of Eden, or in the land of Canaan, but in those to whom the possession was given. Accordingly, the new Jerusalem exhibits the same benefits, the enjoyment of the same inheritance, but without the legal condition. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law,† (Gal. iii. 13 ; ) the hand-writing of ordinances, (the statutes,) involving the peril of the curse, has been blotted out, or, rather, all their requisitions have been fulfilled by him who became sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him—old things have passed away, all things have become new.

§ 516. 'But the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it ;' or, *and* the throne, &c.—There is no occasion for using the conjunction καὶ disjunctively here. The advantage enjoyed by the city about to be described, is something in addition to what was before said of it : "There shall be no more curse, and the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it."

\* Out of the works of the law : something proceeding from that system, and depending upon it.

† The word rendered curse in Galatians is κατὰρα ; in this passage of the Apocalypse it is καταράθιμα ; but they both signify *obnoxious to punishment*, (Rob. Lex.) and are very nearly equivalent terms.

One advantage arising from this position of the throne in the city is, as we have noticed, (§ 510.) that the source whence the pure river of the water of life proceeds is in the city ; there is no danger of its being cut off ; it forms with the throne a constituent part of the city. The throne itself (the great *white* throne, § 455) is that which exhibits the sovereignty of God and the Lamb, identifying them both as one sovereign. As we might render the Greek—"The *seat* of God and the Lamb shall be in it,"—the figure does not admit, as we are apt to imagine, of the idea of two seats on one throne ; God and the Lamb, in this stage of revelation, are identic. This throne is in the city ; it is a constituent part of the city ; and corresponding with this, we say the element of divine sovereignty is a constituent part of the economy of grace ; while the infinite power of the *righteousness* of Jehovah to save to the uttermost all to whom it is imputed, as it is the instrument of exhibiting the sovereignty of God and the Lamb, is also a constituent part of the same economy. These also are reasons why there is *no more curse* ; viz., the predominance of sovereign grace, and the certain and secure supply afforded by the river of life flowing from the throne.

It was said of the redeemed, (Rev. vii. 17,) "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes"—we have here an explanation of the process. The element of divine sovereignty is a constituent element of the plan of salvation ; the two are inseparable. It is also the never-failing source of the atoning and justifying power—the disciple amidst every doubt casts himself upon this one overcoming principle of sovereign grace, and is sustained by that infinite righteousness which, in the language of inspiration, is declared to be "like the great mountains." Here every doubt is ended, and every tear is wiped away.

'And his servants shall serve *him* ;'—God and the Lamb, one Being, one and the same occupant of the throne—as otherwise we may presume it would have been said, *their* servants shall serve *them*. The word translated servant, (*δοῦλος*), differs very materially in its import from *ὁ μισθωτός* or *ὁ μίσθιος*, which signifies a *hired* person. The individual serving for wages is at liberty to hire himself out or not. If he chooses to forego the prospect of compensation, he is under no obligation to serve, he may remain idle ; but the servants in the sense of the text (*δούλοι*) are under an obligation to serve. They are not supposed indeed to be in a position of bondage as under the law, but they are in the position of those who have been redeemed from captivity, and under the obligation of gratitude to devote themselves to the service of their Redeemer. They have been *bought with a price*, (1 Cor. vi. 20, vii. 23 ;) they belong therefore to him that bought them, and are therefore bound to glorify him in their body and in their spirits which are his. To deny this obligation would be to deny the Lord that bought them ; a heresy predicted of certain false teachers, (2 Peter ii. 1.)

and a heresy causing the way of truth to be evil spoken of. They have been redeemed from the curse of the law ; they do not serve in order to be redeemed, but because they have been redeemed. Being made free from *sin*,—delivered from the sting of death—sin having no more power to bring them into condemnation, (Rom. vi. 14,) they become on this account the servants (*δοῦλοι*) of God—of him to whom they owe their deliverance.

It might appear almost unnecessary to predict that the servants of God should serve *Him* ; but we presume the design is to place in a prominent point of view the *motive* of action, which, as we have elsewhere shown, (§ 180,) characterizes the service ; and to show that this motive and the service characterized by it necessarily result from the predominance of the element of sovereign grace (through the imputation of divine righteousness) in securing the eternal life of the disciple, (Rom. v. 21.) The bond-servant or slave, actuated only by the fear of punishment or the hope of reward, although his conduct may be all that is required, could not be said, strictly speaking, to *serve* his master ; because his motive is to serve himself, and he has no other end in view. It could not be said of the master of such slaves, *His servants serve him*. But without any other change of circumstances, if these slaves could be supposed to act only from a motive of love for their master, or gratitude towards him, without any end of their own in view, then this declaration might be made of them, in the strictest sense of the expression, “ His servants serve *him*.”

In the exhibition here made of the plan of salvation, under the figure of the new Jerusalem, the most abundant provision is seen to have been made for the safety and comfort, and even glory of the inhabitants. In addition to this, it is now shown, (from the location of the throne,) that every benefit, or privilege, or glory, afforded, or to be afforded by this provision, is due to sovereign *grace* alone ; consequently, the recipient of these favours has no motive of action left, and can have no other motive, than that of *serving* his Benefactor. With him there can be no room for motives resulting either from *fear* or *hope* ; his bread is given him, his water is sure : he is abundantly satisfied with the fulness of God’s house, and made to drink of the river of his pleasures, (Ps. xxxvi. 8.) Of such, therefore, it may be said, not only that they are the servants of God, but also that they serve *Him*.\* In like manner the principles of the economy of grace will be manifested to tend directly to the service and honour of God.

\* The Romans had two sorts of servants—the slave proper, and the slave made free, or the *freed-man*. The first served from a motive of fear ; the last, after having been made free, remained frequently with his master, sometimes as a confidential servant, and generally so remaining and serving (as we may suppose) from a sentiment of grateful attachment. To this distinction allusion appears to be made, 1 Cor.



§ 517. 'And they shall see his face.'—Or, as the Greek expression might be rendered, 'They shall behold his countenance;' that is, the face of God and the Lamb—not *their* faces, but one face—a fulfilment of the prediction, (Is. xxxiii. 17,) "Thine eyes shall see the King *in his beauty*." That the face of God and the Lamb may be seen, it must be manifested, or unveiled. Such a manifestation we suppose to be here contemplated. Under the old dispensation, no man could see the face of God and live, (Ex. xxxiii. 2;) under the new economy, the face of God is exhibited in Jesus Christ; the disciple in Christ enjoying the position of holiness necessary to enable him to see God, (§ 321;) and God in Christ unveiling himself to the disciple.

To behold the face of a sovereign, is an expression in Scripture for the enjoyment of his favour, receiving marks of his approbation; a deprivation of this privilege of seeing the king's face, being an opposite token of disapprobation. As Absalom, although permitted at the solicitation of Joab to return to Jerusalem, was not allowed to see the king's face, (2 Sam. xiv. 28.) The kings of the earth, the great men, and the rich men, &c., could not endure the face of him who sat on the throne, (Rev. vi. 15, 16;) from whose face, also, the *former heaven* and the *former earth* fled away, (Rev. xix. 11;) representing, as we have supposed, elements not to be countenanced in an exhibition of divine sovereignty. Opposite to this the elements here personified as the *servants* of God and the Lamb, in the strict sense of the term, so far from fleeing away, or calling for a shelter to hide themselves, see the face and enjoy the favour of the sovereign on the throne. Elements or principles, as they are, of the divine plan of redemption, tending directly to the service of God and the Lamb, they are countenanced and sustained by the ruling element of sovereign grace.

'And his name shall be in their foreheads.'—Like the *opposites* of those hiding themselves in the dens and the rocks of the mountains, these servants of God and of the Lamb are sealed in their foreheads, (Rev. vi. 15, and vii. 3.) We suppose them to be identic with the *one hundred and forty-four thousand* of all the twelve tribes—elements of truth resulting from the combined revelations of the old and new dispensations; manifested in the first instance as the chosen servants of God; next seen to be associates and co-operators with the Lamb (the element of propitiation) in exhibiting the glory of God and the triumph of the elements of grace over the principles of self-righteousness and misinterpretation, (Rev. xiv. 1-4, and

vii. 22, 23. The disciple of Christ may be contemplated either as the *slave* or as the *freed-man* of his divine master:—as purchased by the blood of Christ, he *belongs* to Christ, and is, on that account, bound to serve him forever: as placed in a position of freedom by *grace*, he is the freed-man of Christ, and bound to serve him from a *motive of gratitude*.

xv. 2-4;) and, finally, manifested to be constituent elements of the economy of grace, servants of God and the Lamb as one object of worship, having his name, the name of God and the Lamb, *in their foreheads*. This mark we suppose (§ 326) to be equivalent to some prominent feature of the doctrinal principle distinguished by it, and places the true character and tendency of that principle beyond dispute; bearing in this respect the seal of divine approbation, and affording upon all occasions a token for the recognition of its correctness.

When the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand was first described, no name was mentioned; when those sealed ones were next seen, the name of the Father of the Lamb is expressly stated to be written in their foreheads, (Rev. xiv. 1;) now the revelation being nearly completed, the same name, (§ 100,) as we presume it to be, is announced (taking the connection of this verse with the preceding into view) as the name of God and of the Lamb;—doctrines, tending to show the honour and glory of the whole work of man's redemption to belong to God and the Lamb, as one Being, may be considered so characterized as to bear the name of that one Being in their foreheads. The same may be said of the principles of such doctrines; such a characteristic feature being a mark or indication of the *setting apart* of the doctrine possessing it to the manifestation of the truth.

A plate of pure gold bearing the inscription *Holiness to the Lord*, was to be placed upon Aaron's *forehead*, (Ex. xxviii. 37, 38,) "That he may bear," as it was said, "the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow" (sanctify or set apart) "in all their gifts; and it shall be upon his *forehead*, that they may be accepted before the Lord." So, according to the LXX, the servant of Abraham selected a jewel for the *forehead*, as a mark of the distinction intended for Rebekah, (Gen. xxix. 22.) On the other hand, the mark in the *forehead* of the leprous man, was the indication of his utter uncleanness, (Lev. xiii. 43-46;) and the harlot in the wilderness bore the inscription upon her *forehead*, "Mystery," "Babylon," &c., and the subjects of the beast, without exception, received a mark in their *foreheads*, as well as in their right hands. It is thus to the *forehead*, that we are to look for an index of the character, office, or position of the individual marked; and analogous with this we judge of the character of a system, doctrine, or principle, by some distinguishing feature or manifest tendency to be observed in it.

The apostles wrought miracles *in the name* of their divine Master. The glory of what they were enabled to perform thus redounded to him, and not to them. The disciple offers his prayers in *the name* of Jesus; the power of the petition, therefore, and the praise for the answer to the petition, are to be ascribed *to the name* in which it is offered, and not to the piety, fervency, or merit, of the petitioner. So, Col. iii. 17, "And whatsoever ye do in word

or deed, do all *in the name* of the Lord Jesus ;” as if it were said, that in all things *his name* may be glorified, and not yours. Thus the leading prominent feature in every principle or doctrine peculiar to the economy of grace must be that of a manifest tendency to exalt the name and magnify the glory of God and the Lamb.\*

V. 5. And there shall be no night there; and they shall need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign forever and ever.

Καὶ ἡ νύξ οὐκ ἔσται ἐκεῖ, καὶ οὐχ ἔξουσιν χρεμαίνων φωτὸς λύχνον καὶ φωτὸς ἡλίου, ὅτι κύριος ὁ θεὸς φωτίσει ἐπ' αὐτούς· καὶ βασιλεύσουσιν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

§ 518. ‘And there shall be no night there.’—This was said of the city in the preceding chapter, (v. 25,) but the design was then to show that the gates were never closed; now the purpose is to exhibit the perpetual duration of light—that there is no interval of darkness, and none to be apprehended. “Who is among you,” says the prophet, (Is. l. 10,) “that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God”—and this is said in reference to the justification spoken of in the eighth verse of the same chapter.

We have already defined our views of *light*, in a spiritual sense, as a figure of *divine righteousness*, the moral perfection of the Deity resplendent as the light, and by imputation clothing the objects of his favour with that light, as with a garment. The economy of redemption (the true vision of peace) fully manifested, affords a constant, perpetual exhibition of this gracious provision; for which reason it is said there is no night there—no season of darkness, (§ 506.) The city is an opposite of the kingdom of darkness, (§ 363;) and affording, as it does, an exhibition of the position of the disciple *in Christ*, it is an opposite of those imperfect views of faith, which correspond only with a position *out of Christ*. In this stage of revelation, it may be said, “The darkness is past, and the true light now

\* In the ordinary affairs of life, it is no uncommon thing to make use of the name of a third person to obtain a desired object. Under a monarchical government, he who seeks the liberation of a pardoned criminal, takes with him a document bearing the royal signature. With this he goes to the prison *in the king's name*, and it is manifest that by the power of this name the release is effected.

In matters of commerce, he who has no money in the *bank*, obtains the order of a third person who has money or credit with the institution; thus furnished, the holder of the order receives the amount desired, but it is evidently to *the name* of the third person that the credit of the operation is due. So the disciple, needing a righteousness to justify him at the great tribunal of divine judgment, and having none of his own, presents himself *in the name* of him who is declared to be Jehovah our righteousness, (God and the Lamb;) the plea made *in this name* is admitted, and he is fully justified—the praise and glory of that justification belonging to him whose *name* is thus employed.



shineth ;” an epoch responsive to the prophetic invocation, (Is. lx. 1, 2,) “ Arise, shine ; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people ; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee”—the imputed glory of divine perfection being equivalent to a covering of light.

‘ And they need no candle.’—Or, they have no need of the light of a lamp ; that is, of an artificial light ; such apparently as we find alluded to, Is. l. 2 : “ Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks : walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of my hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow”—a state of sorrow arising from erroneous views further described, Is. lix. 8–10 : “ The way of peace they know not, they have made them crooked paths ; therefore they say, We wait for light, but behold obscurity ; for brightness, but we walk in darkness ; we grope for the wall like the blind, we stumble at noonday as in the night.” Where the knowledge of salvation by *imputed* righteousness is wanting, there are perpetual efforts (crooked ways) to create some righteousness or some merits of one’s own, in the glory of which the deluded errorist thinks himself to be walking, as in the sparks of his own kindling. Where, on the contrary, the truth is manifested and understood, there is no temptation to these efforts : Jehovah once seen as our righteousness, no other light can be required, or even desired—*they need no candle*.

‘ Neither light of the sun, for the LORD GOD giveth them light.’\*—So it was said in the preceding chapter, (v. 23,) “ The city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it,” &c. ; and we have there remarked, that the *glory* of God, as it is manifest in the Lamb, is the light, or *lamp* of the city, (§ 504.) The purpose then, was to show the glory of divine perfection to be the only and all-sufficient glory, exhibited by, or in, the economy of redemption. Now, we apprehend, the purpose is to show that as the LORD GOD (Jehovah, § 437) is manifested to be the light of the city, there is no occasion for any of the intermediate representations of that that light before employed. Christ (the *Sun* of righteousness) has now given up the kingdom to the sovereign God, (God and the Lamb ;) this figure, therefore, of the *sun* is no longer called for ; so, as the city is now manifested to exhibit the glory of Jehovah himself, the figure of an opaque body reflecting the rays of the Sun of righteousness (§§ 202, 267) is also dispensed with. The Lord God *shineth upon them*, as it is expressed in the

\* Or, ‘ shall shine *upon* them,’ according to the Greek of some editions, and, we apprehend, correctly ; because the allusion is to their position in light, not to a light in them. It is not an intellectual light, but light in a *spiritual* sense, which is here the subject of contemplation.

original, or as the prophet expresses it, "The LORD (Jehovah) is thine everlasting light," (Is. lx. 19, 20.)

As it is said, (1 John iv. 15, 16,) "Whosoever confesseth that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God.\* God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." The same God, of whom it is said (1 Tim. vi. 16) that "He is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, *dwelling in the light* which no man can approach unto." Consequently, to dwell in God is to *dwell in light*, (spiritual light or righteousness;) as it was predicted in reference to views of faith of this character, "Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength," (Is. xlv. 24.)

§ 519. 'And they shall reign for ever and ever.'—In addressing himself to the seven churches, (Rev. i. 6,) the apostle speaks of them, as well as of himself, as having been made kings and priests unto God, according to our common version; or, according to the Wiclif version, and many Greek editions, (§ 15,) as those to whom a kingdom had been made by their being constituted priests to God. In the new song of the *four beasts* and *twenty-four elders*, (Rev. v. 8–10,) they speak of themselves as made kings and priests, (§ 140,) and as such destined to reign upon the earth; or, as it is here also expressed by Wiclif, "*madist us a kingdom prestis to oure God, and we schuln regne on erthe.*" So it is said of those that have part in the first resurrection, that they shall be *priests* of God and of Christ, and shall *reign* with him a thousand years. In the passage under consideration, neither of the terms *king* or *priest* is mentioned, but we may reasonably presume that the *reigning* is of the same character as that spoken of on the three preceding occasions.

As we have noticed before, the term *Βασιλεύς*, usually rendered king, was sometimes applied amongst the Greeks to "*one who presided over sacred things*, Dem. 940, 13," and *Βασιλισσα*, (queen,) is "*spoken of the wife of the rex sacrorum at Athens*, Dem. 1370," (Rob. Lex. 104, 105;) while the verb, *Βασιλεύω*, commonly rendered *reign*, signifies, metaphorically, to be in force, to be predominant, to prevail, as is said of *death*, *sin*, and *grace*, Rom. v. 14, 17, 21, vi. 12. This reigning we may presume, therefore, to be a *priestly* reigning, a predominance in sacred things, a predominance or ruling of certain principles of faith in matters of religious doctrine.

It is evident that this term *reign*, or *king*, is not to be understood here in the ordinary sense, as of the possession of supreme authority by human

\* This *dwelling in God* we take to be a figure of the position in which the disciple is accounted to be placed in divine judgment; the *confession* above mentioned being a *mark* or *token*, and not the *means* of occupying the position described: as the apostle (John) commences the chapter with a designation of marks by which the Spirit of God is to be known.

beings; for, if we suppose every disciple saved to become, in a future state, literally a king or chief, we must either suppose the whole multitude of disciples to be kings over those who are not saved, or else they must all of them be kings without subjects. We are shut up to the conclusion, therefore, that the term *reign* is to be understood here in a metaphorical or spiritual sense, that the *reigning* pertains to sacred things, (matters of faith;) and that, in order to ascertain its true character, we must take into view the peculiar functions of the *priesthood*; the *degree* of power being illustrated by the figure of royal authority; the *kind* of power by the character of the priestly office.

The word priest or priests does not occur in any of the Epistles, except in that to the Hebrews. In this Epistle, as well as in the Gospels and in Acts, these terms are exclusively applied to the Jewish priests, strictly such under the Levitical law; except in Hebrews, where Christ and Melchisedek are spoken of as priests; and in Acts xiv. 13, where the *priests* of Jupiter are mentioned.\* Christ himself nowhere designates his apostles or any of his followers as *priests*, nor do the apostles themselves anywhere assume this title or appellation. The office and title of *priest*, throughout the New Testament, appear to be contemplated as altogether vested in the house of Aaron, under the legal dispensation; and, on the fulfilment of that dispensation, as having been altogether merged in the person of Christ.

The term *priesthood* occurs, in the New Testament, only in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the subject treated of is the Levitical priesthood, (merging, as we have viewed it, in the person of Christ,) and in the first Epistle of Peter, (ii. 5 and 9,) where the apostle speaks of the whole multitude of those to whom his Epistle is addressed, (the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, &c.,) as a holy and royal priesthood, recommending even to this priesthood their reception of *the sincere milk of the word as new-born babes*. As he says, "if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious," implying very apparently that, so far from being able *to teach*, there was some doubt whether they were yet possessed of the elementary principles of the doctrine of Christ; whence we draw the inference that, in the contemplation of the inspired writer, the province of a priest was altogether distinct from that of a *teacher*. In addition to this, the apostle, in the same connection, gives us the reason why these "new-born babes" are denominated a *priesthood*, which is, that they are "*to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable*," &c.; whence we draw the further conclusion, that the functions of a priest, strictly speaking, are those peculiar to the offering of

\* The priests of Jupiter were properly styled *priests*, because they offered sacrifices, or presided over the offering of sacrifices. Such were also the *priests* of Baal, (2 Kings x. 19,) and of other *false gods*, mentioned in the Old Testament, not teachers, or preachers, or pastors, but *sacrificators*.



sacrifices. A priest may be a teacher, and a teacher may be a priest; but a teacher, pastor, or minister, in the ordinary sense of the term, is not necessarily a *priest* in the scriptural sense of the term. Under the Levitical dispensation the offering of sacrifices, in the nature of the case, rendered it incumbent upon the priest to teach the children of Israel the difference between *holy* and *unholy*, *clean* and *unclean*, (Lev. x. 10, 11;) but even in this respect, in the time of King Asa, it appears that Israel had been for a long season without a *teaching* priest, (2 Chron. xv. 3.) This teaching may be considered, therefore, a function incidental to the office of a priest, but not that which characterized the individual as a priest. A priest might be a prophet, or might be so on some occasions, but all priests were not prophets, neither were all the prophets of the Hebrews priests; nor, we apprehend, were the schools of the prophets (as they have been termed) schools of priests, preparatory to the service of the temple.

The English term *priest* comes apparently from the French verb *prêter*, originally spelt with an *s*, (*prester*,) without the *circumflex*, signifying *to offer*—that is, to offer sacrifice. The Greek *ἱερεύς*, translated priest, is derived from the verb *ἱερέω*, signifying not merely to offer sacrifice, but also to *immolate*, to slaughter, the victim offered; a function which in early times belonged particularly to the office of a priest, as we find, under the law, the principal duties performed by the priests in the temple service consisted of *manual operations*; and as, in the example of the patriarch upon Mount Moriah, we perceive it to have been considered a matter of course that the offerer of the sacrifice should himself slaughter the victim. So Jesus Christ speaks of the offering he was about to make, (John x. 15 and 18:) “I lay down my life of myself. No one (*οὐδεὶς*) taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” Whence he is called the priest (the high priest) of our profession; not as a *teacher*, although he taught as never man spake; nor as a *pastor*, although he is the shepherd (pastor) and bishop (overseer) of our souls; but he is called a *priest*, because he himself officiated, once for all, in offering up the one great sacrifice of atonement, called for by Infinite Justice, for blotting out the transgressions of a world of sinners. If he had not laid down his life of himself, he could not have been called a priest; and if he had not had power to lay it down, as well as power to take it again, he could not have filled the office of a priest.

§ 520. Under the law none of the people were esteemed worthy to offer sacrifices acceptable to God; it was only through the appointed channel that the offerings of any could be received, and they were then accepted only because such was the *medium* ordained of God;—this *medium* was the house of Aaron. The assumption of the priestly office on the part of any individual of any other family, would not have rendered the sacrifice either *holy* or *acceptable*. Aaron and his lineage may thus be said to have reigned

over sacred things ; to them was given a kingdom, that they should be priests to God ; they did not assume it, neither did Aaron assume the office. The institution of a *medium*, through which the offering of a sinful being could be made acceptable to the Most High, could not in the nature of the case be a matter of human appointment ; neither could the presiding over such an institution be an office which any created being could assume for himself, or in behalf of others. Wherefore, it is said, (Heb. v. 4,) “ No man taketh this honour upon himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron ;”—not the honour of teaching, or preaching, or even of prophesying, but the honour of offering sacrifices for sins ; the honour of becoming a *medium* through which, or a *mediator* through whom the propitiatory offerings of a sinful creature can be made to a God of infinite purity. This is the *honour* we apprehend which no man taketh, or can take upon himself, except he that is called of God. The house of Aaron has long since passed into oblivion ; no pretender to a lineal descent from that family, amongst the descendants of Abraham, ventures to claim the priestly or sacrificatorial office ; even the tribe of Levi is no longer to be identified ; and if the temple were now restored, and sacrifices as of old again required, no man of the Hebrew nation at least would assume to occupy at the altar the station of him who was called of God.

Let us contrast with this the language of the apostle Peter, concerning those for whose growth even the *milk of the word* was desirable : “ Ye also, as lively stones, (in allusion to the living stone, Christ,) are built up a spiritual house, an *holy priesthood*,” &c. ; and again, “ But ye are a chosen generation, a *royal priesthood*,” &c. Thus, an honour which Aaron did not take upon himself, and which in a certain sense, even Christ, it is said, did not take upon himself, (Heb. v. 5,) is attributed to a whole community of disciples, “ strangers scattered,” &c. The priestly reign or kingdom of the house of Aaron, merged in the person of Christ, has now become the kingdom of the followers of Jesus ; they have not merely a priesthood instituted among them, as was the case with the children of Israel, but they are all, without exception, constituted one priesthood, and one generation of priests ;—and this for the purpose, as it is said by Peter, of offering up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. As Aaron and his descendants presided over the offerings of the temple, so these preside or *reign* (βασιλεύω) over the spiritual sacrifices alluded to.

It has been suggested that “ Christians are here denominated priests, *ιεράτευμα*, because they are said, ἀνερέγκαι πνευματικὰς θυσίας, i. e., instead of offering victims, they exhibit piety and devotedness to the service of God ; and being priests, they are also said to be βασιλῆις,” (royal ;) “ in the same manner as they are said συμβασιλεύειν τῷ Χριστῷ,” (to reign with Christ,) &c., (Rob. Lex. 313.)

This interpretation comes far short, we think, of the meaning of the

apostle. If Christians had no better sacrifices to make than those of their own "piety and devotedness," we apprehend their offerings would be little better than those of Cain—*mere fruits of the ground*:—a spiritual sacrifice must be a sacrifice in a spiritual sense. In this sense Christ, our great High Priest, offered once for all his merits, his atonement, his righteousness, in behalf of all his followers; this was the offering over which he reigned or presided. The disciple adopted in Christ is accounted to offer the same sacrifice—in the sight of God occupying the position of his divine substitute; and thus, in the same sense, as a priest *reigning* or presiding over sacred things.

Such a state of things must be the converse of that existing under the legal dispensation; there, no individual could officiate as a priest or sacrificator, except he were of the family of Aaron; here every individual, although so feeble in faith as to be fed with milk rather than meat, is accounted a *priest*; coming unto God *in Christ*, as in his holy temple; resting his offering upon Christ for sanctification, as upon an altar; and pleading the merits of Christ as his offering; dipping, as it were, his hyssop branch into the blood of sprinkling, and laying his hand upon the sin-atonement Lamb. In this respect, the whole community of Christians constitute a royal priesthood, and every member of that community *reigns* as a *priest*.\* The definition we have already given of the term must be sufficient to show, however, that every such priest is not a pastor, or teacher, or prophet, bishop or overseer, presbyter or elder; the duties to be discharged by such functionaries requiring gifts and talents not alike possessed by all; while the *spiritual* priesthood requires no other qualification than that of adoption in Christ, according to the purpose of God.

Apocalyptically, we apply the same interpretation to the words "and they shall reign for ever and ever." The reign is of the priestly character, a spiritual presiding over spiritual sacrifices. The elements of the economy of grace are here personified as the servants of God, charged with the exhibition of the true sacrifice, as well as of all that pertains to the *worship* of God, in the strict sense of that term. The same elements of truth which virtually serve God and the Lamb, by promoting his glory, (causing all honour and praise to be given to him,) virtually also preside in his temple; reigning as priests over sacred things, by their tendency to place the vicarious offering of Christ in its true light, and thence educing that offering or sacrifice of gratitude, which the redeemed sinner is bound to render to God in return for all his benefits. As it is said, in reference to the same elements, Rom. v. 20, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin

\* Christ is the Aaron of the Christian dispensation; every follower of Christ, as adopted in him, is accordingly of the house and lineage of the spiritual Aaron, the High-Priest of our profession.



reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord ;” or, as the language might be paraphrased, ‘ Where the transgression of the law most abundantly rendered man obnoxious to condemnation, there the principles of salvation by sovereign grace most powerfully predominated, through justification by Jesus Christ, unto eternal life.’

V. 6. And he said unto me, These sayings (are) faithful and true.\*

Καὶ εἶπέ μοι· οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι πιστοὶ καὶ ἀληθινοί·

§ 521. ‘ And he said unto me,’ &c.—The word *are* is supplied by our translators, and we may dispense with it, or transpose it by rendering the expression, ‘ these *are* the faithful and true sayings.’ This is the third time in which this formal declaration has occurred, the circumstances on each occasion being similar ; that is, as if an answer were required to a question understood, (§§ 427, 471.) It has just been declared that these servants of God shall rule, reign, or predominate forever. The question understood, we suppose to be, Who are these servants of God ? the answer is, These, the true and faithful words or sayings ; or, rather, as the term *λόγοι*, plural of *λόγος*, might be rendered, These faithful and true *doctrines*, or elements of *doctrine* ;† principles of the economy of grace, comprehended in the whole purpose of God ;—that decision of the divine mind, (*fiat*), unchangeable from all eternity, which is distinguished, by way of pre-eminence in the Scriptures, as the WORD OF GOD. Every doctrinal principle involved in this *Word* or purpose, pertaining to man’s redemption, must reign, preside, or predominate ; its reign being secured by all the arrangements of the economy of redemption, as the elements of a city population are secured in the enjoyment of their rights and privileges by the entire structure of the city, with all its peculiar advantages.

These sayings, principles, or words, (*λόγοι*;) were personified, Rev. xix. 9, as the guests at a nuptial feast, taking part in the celebration or manifestation of the marriage. Again, they appear, Rev. xxi. 3–5, as the things made new ; and lastly, they are represented as these servants of God and the Lamb ; their whole tendency being that of glorifying the name of Jehovah. We do not suppose these sayings, however, to be represented solely by the dwellers in the city, we suppose all the elements of the economy of redemption to be virtually the servants, and (*οἱ λόγοι*) the words of God ; accordingly they are all represented by different parts of the city, or different parts of the city may be different figures for the same elements of truth, or true sayings.

\* We have divided the verse here, because we think the subject of the first clause properly belongs to the description just given of the holy city ; while the last clause is part of the account given by the messenger of himself.

† (Rob. Lex. 416. *λόγος* (3) (*b*) (*a*) applied to Rev. i. 9, and xx. 4.)

The preceding narrative, from the commencement of the fourth chapter to the close of the twentieth chapter, contains an exhibition of the contest between opposite principles, (the elements of truth and those of error,) in sacred things—matters pertaining to the way of salvation. Towards the close of this narrative, the elements of truth become more and more developed, and their destined predominance more and more brought forth, till finally, in this exhibition of the new Jerusalem, it is manifested that they are to reign or rule forever; all of these elements being symbolized in the various particulars given of the splendid and well-fortified city just contemplated; they are all spoken of as destined to serve God continually, and to rule or reign in sacred things forever; and all, accordingly, we apprehend, are entitled to the appellation of true and faithful sayings, (λόγοι,) elements of doctrine, elements of the same class as those of whom it is said, Rev. xiv. 5, “And in their mouth was found no guile;” opposites of “whatsoever causeth abomination or maketh a lie.”

#### RETROSPECT OF THE VISION OF THE BRIDE.

§ 522. Although the description upon which we have been commenting is that of a city, and not of a woman, we have purposely retained for our remarks the *running title* of *the Bride, the Lamb's wife*, because it is important to bear in mind, throughout our consideration of the subject, that the new Jerusalem or holy city, and the bride or wife of the Lamb, are representations of the same mystery—interchangeable figures of the same subject.

Whether as a bride or city, the *holy* Jerusalem is equally an opposite of Babylon; both are revealed to us by a like twofold mode of illustration. The one as a bride appears in a clothing of the purest white, prepared by the hand of God himself; all her attractions being destined to secure the affections of one object alone; the other appears arrayed in the meretricious decorations of a harlot, intent upon perverting from the right way all coming within the baneful influence of her allurements. But whether as a bride or city, the new Jerusalem is seen descending immediately from God, out of heaven, leaving no room for suspicion of the smallest adventitious mixture of earthly material, either in her own composition or in that of her array; while all that is to be inferred from the description of Babylon as a woman, or as a city, shuts us up to the conclusion that she is *of the earth, earthy*.

From the description given of the holy city, the hand of man is not to be traced in its structure; as, in the building of the altar of stone, upon which no *iron tool* of man was to pass, (Ex. xx. 25; Deut. xxvii. 5,) an intermixture of human labour in giving it perfection, or in attempting to

make it more acceptable to Jehovah, would have been a pollution. Babylon, on the contrary, is represented to have risen into importance from her own resources—her arts, her manufactures, and her commerce ;—her magnificence was instrumentally the work of men's hands, and her wealth and power the result of human toil. Nothing is said in the Apocalypse of the walls of Babylon ; they were but earthly mounds when first erected, and may be supposed to have crumbled to decay long ere her final destruction. Of gates she had no occasion, for there was nothing however false and abominable which might not have obtained admittance ; even that which was of a better character would have been received for the purpose of effecting its perversion. Neither is any thing said of her supply of water : the *great river* had been dried up ; she had no living springs to which she could resort ; her cisterns were *broken cisterns*, incapable of answering the purpose for which they were intended ; she was utterly without the means of arresting the conflagration with which she was destroyed. Sudden destruction came upon her, and that without remedy—she could not escape ;—the fire destroyed every work, for every work was of the same destructible material ; even her site or foundation was nowhere to be found. She had no temple of God—He was not in *any* of her thoughts—God is not supposed to have been there worshipped at all. Self was the idol of her adoration ; and of that idol the whole city may be contemplated as the temple ; *self-interest*, *self-gratification*, and *mercenary calculation*, constituting all her temple service.

We have adverted to these particulars of the harlot city by way of recalling the imagery furnishing so striking a contrast with the features of the vision of peace, the heavenly Jerusalem. Employing Paul's exposition of the two Jerusalems, (Gal. iv. 24,) as a *key* to these two figures of the Apocalypse, we have taken them as representations of two plans, systems, or economies of salvation ; Babylon representing a plan of works, not purely legal, but a *confused mixture*—in pretence a gospel plan, but really an adulteration of the elements of grace with those of works, (§§ 385, 386.) The holy Jerusalem, on the other hand, we suppose to represent, as in a picture, the divine scheme of salvation by *grace*, sovereign grace, entirely free from any admixture of pretensions to merit on the part of the being saved. Accordingly, the glory exhibited in this picture is the glory of God alone. The vision offers for our contemplation no foundation or site upon which to rest our hopes other than Christ, (God in Christ,) the stone, the rock, the mountain filling the whole world. It shows us no wall of salvation but that of divine righteousness ; it shows us no gate but the way of access to God *in Christ*—a way justly to be esteemed a *pearl of inestimable value* ; it shows us no means of ablution from sin but the river of the water of life, the atoning offering of the Son of God. It shows us no



element of eternal life but the merits of Christ, the fruit and the leaves of the tree of life ; it shows us no light or perfection constituting a portion of this scheme but that of Jehovah himself. At the same time, it shows us that all these elements are but so many modes of exhibiting one means of eternal life—God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. The foundation or mountain, the wall, the gates, the river, the tree of life, the light, are all so many representations of God the Saviour ; and all of them such representations as have been elsewhere set forth by prophets and apostles, and to which the whole burden of the Old and New Testament revelations bears a uniform testimony ;—the manifestation of truth exhibited in this vision of peace, in which God and the Lamb appear one and the same divine Being, showing us what the apostle declares (1 Cor. xv. 28) is to be finally manifested—that God is all in all—Jehovah our righteousness. As it is said, (Is. xii. 2,) “ Behold, *God* is my salvation ; I will trust and not be afraid : the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song.”

§ 523. That such is the interpretation to be given to this portion of the Apocalypse may be readily granted ; but the question will still occur, *Why* is this exhibition of the economy of grace denominated the Lamb’s *wife* or *bride* ?

To answer this inquiry we go back to the account first given of the institution of marriage, and learn that its prominent characteristic is that of an *accounted identity*, resulting from the union of two parties by this rite, (Gen. ii. 24 ;) an identity referred to by Jesus Christ himself, as the peculiar feature of the same union, (Matt. xix. 5, 6 ;) and an identity alluded to by Paul as analogous to that of the mysterious union of Christ and the church, (Eph. v. 31, 32.) To say that the new Jerusalem is the wife of the Lamb, is equivalent, therefore, to the declaration that the new Jerusalem and the Lamb are to be accounted identic :—whatever is represented by the one is represented by the other ; whatever is revealed concerning the one is revealed concerning the other ; whatever the holy city represents, with her walls, her gates, her light, her river, her structures of gold, and her tree of life, is represented also by the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. That the Lamb of the Apocalypse is a figure of the divine Being to whom the appellation of “ the Lamb of God ” was given by the Baptist, (John i. 29, 36,) must be indisputable. This Lamb of God is Jesus Christ : whatever is revealed then under the symbol of the bride or Lamb’s wife, must be accounted identic with Christ ; and a revelation or unveiling of the bride or holy city, must be accounted equivalent to an unveiling of Jesus Christ himself ; corresponding with the construction (§ 2) put upon the title of this book, (Rev. i. 1,) “ *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* ;” that it is the unveiling of his character, and offices, and work, in what may be termed their peculiarly spiritual aspect.

Jesus Christ reveals *himself* in this vision of the apostle, and he makes this revelation of himself through the instrumentality of the new Jerusalem—the wife of the Lamb ;—what she represents, He is ; He is represented in her. As the woman is the glory of the man, (1 Cor. xi. 7,) so the new Jerusalem exhibits the glory of the Lamb, or rather of God and the Lamb, one Being. The glory of the Lamb is the glory of God, (§ 504 ;) as Christ is declared (Heb. i. 3,)\* to have been the express image of the Father, the glory of the holy city, or that exhibited by the holy city, is the glory of God. This glory of God is his *goodness* ; the new Jerusalem is an exhibition of the goodness or glory of God. The disciple, in contemplating the heavenly Jerusalem, sees what Moses, when in the cleft of the rock, was permitted to see, *this goodness passing before him*, (Ex. xxxiii. 19.) The goodness of God, in the sense here alluded to, we apprehend to be his loving-kindness (Fr. *bonté*) in the work of redemption. The holy city of the Apocalypse is an exhibition of the loving-kindness or glory of God in all its particulars ; it is an exhibition in detail of the merciful purpose of God to save by sovereign grace. This merciful purpose of God is his glory, of which glory Christ is the manifestation in the first instance, and the economy of grace, as identic with Christ, the further exhibition, under the figure of the new Jerusalem.

§ 524. Corresponding with this view, we have in the preceding pages assumed the apocalyptic Jerusalem to be a representation or vision of the economy of redemption ; a *true* picture, as opposed to that afforded by the harlot city, (Babylon,) which we denominate a false picture. The economy of redemption *in truth* is the economy of *grace* ; the economy of *grace* is God's purpose to save by grace ; the *purpose* of God is the mind, *fiat*, determination of the Supreme Being ; it is the *word* of God : and this Word, it is declared, was made flesh, and manifested on earth in the person of Christ, the Lamb of God. The new Jerusalem, therefore, both as identic with the Lamb, and as an exhibition of the economy (*διαθήκη*) or purpose of sovereign grace, is a vision or picture in detail of the *word* of God ; representing the goodness or loving-kindness involved in that word or purpose, and which goodness constitutes the glory of the Deity ; this glory being exhibited in the economy of redemption, through the instrumentality of Jesus Christ. As it is said of the holy city, the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the *lamp* thereof.

The Lamb and the New Jerusalem of the Apocalypse are figures, but Christ and the economy of grace (the Word) are realities. We do not say, therefore, of the *figures*, that they are identic with the realities ; but the one is as much identic with the other as the appearance of a man's face in the

\* Χαράκτηρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ. The representation of the divine principle itself.

mirror is the same as the man's face. The Lamb, the holy city, and the Rider of the white horse, as figures, are identic ; and the Supreme Being, Christ, and the divine purpose, (word,) are identic, as realities. He that makes all things new is manifest in the Lamb, and the Lamb is manifest in the *bride* ; so God is manifest in Christ, and Christ is manifest in the economy of redemption—the divine purpose or word ;—God the Father, the Son, and the Word, being so many manifestations of the same Saviour.

In the Old Testament writings, God is expressly declared to be the only Saviour, and the part taken by the *Son* in the work of redemption, is but dimly shadowed forth. In the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles of the New Testament, Christ is expressly declared to be the Redeemer, and his name is said to be the only name wherewith we can be saved. In the Apocalypse *the overcoming principle* (ὁ νικῶν) is brought forward as the conqueror and inheritor of all things. This overcoming principle (the purpose of sovereign grace) we apprehend to be revealed under the figure of the Word of God or Conqueror in the narrative portion of the book of Revelation, and under the figure of the bride or wife in the last or descriptive portion of the same book. At the same time, we have not here an exhibition of three Saviours, or three powers of salvation ; we have only the representation of the same Saviour, the same saving power, brought home to our understandings, and presented for the contemplation of our faith in three different ways—as the King of kings, the Faithful and True, and the Word of God, were all revealed in the person of him who had trodden the wine-press alone, (Rev. xix. 11–16.) Christ while on earth revealed the divine purpose of grace (the Word of God) in all he did and taught and suffered—Christ, in the Apocalypse, reveals the same Word or purpose in the particulars given of the Conqueror, and in the illustrations afforded by all that is said of the new Jerusalem, or bride. In the first instance, the truth as it is in Jesus may be said to have been *veiled* in the flesh—in the last, (the apocalyptic revelation,) it is *unveiled* in the spirit, and, thus spiritually understood, it is an unveiling of Christ himself.

§ 525. This unveiling of Christ, spiritually understood, may be considered, therefore, in a certain degree, a fulfilment of the promised coming of the Comforter, (the Holy Spirit, of whom it was said to the disciples of Jesus, “ He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you,” John xiv. 27 ;) the testimony borne by the Comforter being *collateral* with that to be borne by the apostles, as we gather from the assurance subsequently given : “ He shall testify concerning me, and ye also shall testify”—μαρτυρήσει περὶ ἐμοῦ καὶ ὑμεῖς δὲ μαρτυρεῖτε (John xv. 26, 27)—the Comforter bearing no other testimony than that contained in the whole volume of inspiration.



Of this Comforter (Paraclete\*) it is also said, "He shall reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment," (John xvi. 8,) or as we think the expression might be understood, He shall *confute* the world concerning sin, and concerning justification, and concerning condemnation—ἐλέγξει τὸν κόσμον περὶ ἁμαρτίας καὶ δικαιοσύνης καὶ περὶ κρίσεως. The teachings of the Spirit will convince those of sin who believe themselves to be without sin. It will convince the self-righteous of the necessity of justification, through an imputed righteousness; and it will show the certainty of condemnation where this means of salvation is wanting.

The world here spoken of (κόσμος) must be that which Jesus says, in the same connexion, he has overcome, (John xvi. 33.) We suppose it to be the arrangement of principles placing the disciple in a position of dependence upon his own merits. The word rendered *reprove*, as above, signifies primarily "*to confute*," to *put to shame*, (Rob. Lex.) Accordingly, the operation of this revelation by the Holy Spirit is to *confute*, or put to shame the pretensions of this self-righteous economy, figuratively termed the *world*: this confutation of the pretensions of the world by the Holy Spirit being equivalent to *the overcoming* of the world by Jesus Christ. It is not merely a convincing of the thoughtless and profane and dissolute, who are literally living without God and without hope, that they are sinners; an assertion which for the most part they would not pretend to deny; but it is a convincing of those trusting to their own merits, who go about to establish their own righteousness, that they are especially the sinners in contemplation—that even with them, in their position *out of Christ*, sin lieth at the door. This is pre-eminently the work to be accomplished: *Hoc opus, hic labor est.*

To effect this work, the just sense of the written word of revelation is requisite, and for the attainment of this just sense, the illustrations of the Apocalypse are given. A large portion of these illustrations, as we have seen, are applied to the elucidation of errors and erroneous systems opposed to the great truth of salvation by sovereign grace; these errors having been overcome, the book closes with an exhibition of the truth itself—the economy of grace illustrated by all the particulars here given of the heavenly Jerusalem. This exhibition, showing as it does, God's purpose (*Word*) to be a purpose of mercy, comes to the desponding disciple certainly as a comforter. Its language is, 'Be of good cheer; the sovereign grace of God is sufficient for thee. Behold the ample provision made for thy salvation:' while coming as it does immediately from God out of heaven, setting forth a

\* Παράκλητος, one who has been called to give assistance; an intercessor, an advocate in a court of justice, (Donnegan.)

way of redemption in which human merit can have no part, its direct tendency must be to confute the pretensions of every self-righteous system, and to point out the only path—the strait and narrow way to eternal life—the gate of pearl inestimably precious.

The view here taken of what is represented by this spiritual city, bride, or wife, corresponds with our remarks in assigning a reason for the appellation *beloved*, given to the besieged city, (§ 453.) God's purpose of grace and mercy is his *beloved* purpose, and this purpose, or word, personated in Christ, is his *beloved* offspring. For the same reason, perhaps, the apostle bearing the name of *the grace of the Lord*, (John,) was distinguished as the disciple whom Jesus loved; although he also loved them all even unto the end, (John xiii. 1.) The same construction enables us to understand why the Messiah of the Old Testament (the Christ of the New) is prophetically spoken of as the servant in whom the Lord *delighteth*, (Is. xlii. 1;) and why it is prophetically said of the exhibition of the economy of grace, restored (as we apprehend it to be in this Apocalypse) from its once perverted state, "Thou shalt no more be termed forsaken, neither shall thy land any more be termed desolate, but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah, for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married."

APOCALYPTIC CONCLUSION.

V. 6, (*continued*).—And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

καὶ κύριος ὁ θεὸς τῶν πνευμάτων τῶν προφητῶν ἀπέστειλε τὸν ἄγγελον αὐτοῦ δεῖξαι τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ, ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει.

§ 526. 'And the Lord God of the holy prophets,' &c.; or, according to our edition of the Greek and others, the Lord God of *the spirits* of the prophets, which, for the reasons we have given, (§ 437,) may be equivalent to the declaration, "And Jehovah of the spirits of the prophets hath sent," &c. That is, the same Being who was spoken of by the prophets as Jehovah, and was contemplated in the spiritual sense of the prophecies as *Jehovah*, he has sent his angel or messenger. The difference may not be material, except that our mode of rendering this appellation calls up an association of ideas not usually accompanying the ordinary rendering. Without this, however, the consideration suggested by the text is very important. The God of the holy prophets is the God of the Apocalypse. The same Being makes the revelation in both cases. The same spirit of inspiration which dictated the writings of Moses and the prophets, dictated also that of

the Apostle John. As this spirit is a spirit of *truth*, pre-eminently so, alike incapable of falsehood, error, or mistake, it follows that both productions must be considered the emanation of the same infallible mind. They must coincide in the testimony, and where the circumstances are similar, they must be susceptible of a like construction. The language of *vision* in the Old Testament, is the language of *vision* in the New. The economy of redemption shadowed forth in one, is the economy revealed and illustrated in the other. There must be, therefore, a consistency in the types, the figures, the doctrines, and principles of both. This we believe to be the case, however imperfect our mode of showing it may appear.

‘Sent his angel.’—The inspired messenger, having performed his promise of showing the apostle the bride, the Lamb’s wife, now proceeds to give an account of his authority for what he has done, and for the various explanations and declarations given by him throughout the exhibition, “to show to his servants the things which must shortly come to pass.” The expression in the Greek is precisely the same as that employed at the commencement of the book, (Rev. i. 1,) where the revelation of Jesus Christ is said to be that “which God gave unto him to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass ;” which things, it is added, he sent and *signified* by his angel to his servant John ;—the words *come to pass* and *be done* being the rendering of the same Greek words—or rather the words *done* and *pass* being both supplied, the original going no further than to say the things which are shortly or *suddenly to be*—that is, to be revealed. This, then, is the angel commissioned to *signify* these things to the apostle, and what is here said to that effect may be considered a notice that the task of the messenger is now performed. He has signified the things which are to be *suddenly*, (§ 4,) that is, *revealed*, as we suppose. Whenever they are revealed to the spiritual understanding, the change of views produced will be suddenly brought about, as must be the change with every disciple in his transition to another state of existence ; from a state where he sees darkly, to one where he sees even as he also is seen. The speaker may be also the angel who took the apostle first to the wilderness to see the harlot, and afterwards to the mountain to see the bride ; or this angel may be supposed to have left the apostle under the care of the heavenly conductor, accompanying him throughout all the scenes. This, in reality, may be of little consequence. This figure of angels we suppose to be employed in this mystic composition by way of adapting the narrative and scenery to the common apprehension of mankind. The revelation itself may be considered an angel, messenger, or message. If God pleases to reveal the truth to the understanding of a disciple, he has no occasion for the employment of an *embodied* messenger: the spirit of understanding is itself an angel of light, a messenger from God.



V. 7. Behold, I come quickly: blessed (is) he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. Καὶ ἰδοὺ, ἔρχομαι ταχύ. μακάριος ὁ τηρῶν τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου.

§ 527. ‘Behold I come,’ &c.—The words, *saieth the Lord*, seem to be understood here. The angel was already present, and would hardly speak of his own coming, although he might be so misunderstood. The words rendered *shortly*, at the close of the preceding verse, (ἐν τάχει,) and quickly in this verse, (ταχύ,) are so nearly the same, that there seems to have been an intentional bearing of one upon the other. According to the Greek edition we copy, the two sentences should be connected also by the conjunction καί, (and;) reading, “the things which are *suddenly* to be; *and* behold, I come *suddenly* ;” the coming of the Lord being represented as equivalent to the *being done*, or *being revealed*, of the *things*,—both referring to the same manifestation of truth, (§ 17.)

‘Blessed (is) he that keepeth the sayings (τοὺς λόγους) of the prophecy of this book.’—The word rendered blessed, might perhaps be better rendered here, as elsewhere, *happy*. The keeping of these sayings is not the cause or means of salvation, but it is a source of happiness; as it is said, “Blessed (happy) is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity ;” “Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven ;” “Happy is he who hath the God of Jacob for his help.” This blessedness or happiness cannot be enjoyed without a knowledge of the truth, as the sinner, until he feels the assurance of his forgiveness, cannot feel the happiness resulting from his pardon. So we suppose the keeping of the sayings alluded to, to be equivalent to an *understanding* of all that is revealed in this book; the understanding of all of the elements of the covenant of grace affording the same kind of happiness or blessedness as that arising from a sense of sins forgiven. As these words however are the language of vision, they may be supposed to apply to doctrinal elements, personified as disciples; the elements consistent with the truth here revealed, or acting as stewards of this truth, being described as blessed.

The words of this declaration correspond so nearly with what is said at the commencement of the book, (Rev. i. 3,) that we cannot but consider it as marking the termination of the whole narrative—the beginning and the ending; the remaining verses (the present included) occupying the place of an application of the subject. If we contemplated the Apocalypse merely as a prophetic account of ecclesiastical and political transactions to take place in the history of this world, our idea of the happiness derived from keeping these sayings, in any sense, would be very limited; but when we take the word *prophecy* to signify an interpretation of the mind or purpose of the Deity, (§ 69,) and consider that term in this place as referring to the divine purpose of grace and mercy, then we can easily conceive of a

great degree of *blessedness* or *happiness* arising from the keeping and understanding of these sayings. A full assurance of divine forgiveness is probably the source of as great happiness as the human mind is capable of enjoying in this life ; and, consequently, a knowledge of the plan of mercy by which this forgiveness is secured, must be a source of the like happiness in proportion as it is understood by the disciple, and appropriated to his own peculiar circumstances.

Vs. 8, 9. And I John saw these things, and heard (them.) And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See (thou do it) not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

Καὶ γὰρ Ἰωάννης ὁ ἀκούων καὶ βλέπων ταῦτα· καὶ ὅτε ἤκουσα καὶ ἔβλεψα, ἔπεσα προσκυνῆσαι ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ποδῶν τοῦ ἀγγέλου τοῦ δεικνύοντός μοι ταῦτα. Καὶ λέγει μοι· ὅρα μή· σύνδουλός σου εἰμὶ καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου τῶν προφητῶν καὶ τῶν τηρούντων τοὺς λόγους τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου· τῷ Θεῷ προσκύνησον.

§ 528. ‘And I John saw,’ &c. ; or, as we might read the passage, ‘And I John, who saw and heard these things, when I saw and heard them I fell down to prostrate myself,’ &c.—The apostle relates his falling into the same mistake before, (Rev. xix. 10,) and notwithstanding what was then said to him, he seems to repeat the error. We are to recollect, however, that all this is a vision ; as in a dream, during which the reasoning faculties are in a great measure suspended. John gives us an account of his own behaviour, just as it appeared to him in the vision, not just as it should have been in reality ; his impression seems to have been that the angel was a personification of the Supreme Being, and as such entitled to divine honours. This may have arisen from his construction of the declaration, ‘Behold, I come quickly,’ without the preface of, *thus saith the Lord*. The same style of speaking, however, is to be found in the Psalms and prophets ; as, Is. lxiii. 1–5, and Ps. xl. 7, where no one supposes the prophet or psalmist to be speaking of himself. The expression, “The angel which showed me these things,” probably refers to the whole vision of the bride ; as we may suppose the apostle to have imagined that none but the Deity himself could thus unfold the mysterious purpose of sovereign grace.

‘Then saith he unto me,’ &c.—The heavenly messenger announces himself to be an instrument of revelation only ; as such, he styles himself one of the prophetic brethren of the apostle ; and what seems also a little remarkable, one of those whom he has himself just pronounced blessed ; that is, one of the *keepers* of the sayings of this book. The *keeping*, therefore, here intended, is not merely the hearing and understanding for one’s own sake, but it is the keeping of a treasure for the benefit of others ; as the steward of a household keeps the funds intrusted to him for the purpose of appropriating them to certain objects, to which objects he does sub-

sequently appropriate them. This *keeping* consists, accordingly, in disbursing and giving out, as well as in receiving. So Paul speaks of his fellow-apostles and himself as ministers (servants) of Christ, and *stewards* of the mysteries of God. Like the angel, they were all keepers of the mysteries comprehended in the sayings of this book. Such keepers were also the prophets, and they are all pronounced *blessed*; we may suppose, not only because they discovered the truth and enjoyed the knowledge of it themselves, but also because they were made the *blessed* means or instruments of making it known to others. So, apocalyptically, we may speak even of the elements of revelation charged with setting forth the economy of grace, as *keepers* of the sayings of this book.

‘Worship God.’—This admonition, as we have noticed before, (§ 428,) was given, not so much we apprehend for the sake of the apostle, as for the instruction of those who were to come after him. As if it were said, on the former occasion, Whatever may appear to be implied in some parts of this book to the contrary, bear in mind as a rule of interpretation, that God only is to be worshipped; or that, strictly speaking, He alone is an object of worship. So, in this last instance it might be said, emphatically, Bear in mind that God is now manifested to be *all in all*. The Lamb and the Word are merged in the present manifestation of the Sovereign God; to Him alone, therefore, all your adoration is due.

Vs. 10, 11. And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

Καὶ λέγει μοι· μὴ σφραγίσῃς τοὺς λό-  
γους τῆς προφητείας τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου·  
ὁ καιρὸς γὰρ ἐγγύς ἐστιν. Ὁ ἀδίκων ἀδι-  
κησάτω ἔτι, καὶ ὁ ὑπαρὸς ὑπαρενθήτω  
ἔτι· καὶ ὁ δίκαιος δικαιοσύνην ποιησάτω  
ἔτι, καὶ ὁ ἅγιος ἁγιασθήτω ἔτι.

§ 529. ‘And he saith unto me, Seal not,’ &c.—Here is an injunction the opposite of that given the prophet in the time of the captivity: “But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. And I heard,” the prophet adds, “but I understood not: then said I, O Lord, what shall be the end of these things? and he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end!” and again: “But go thy way till the end, for thou shalt stand in thy lot at the end of days.”

It was not given to Daniel to understand or even to inquire into the meaning of the words of his prophecy; they were to remain sealed till a certain distant epoch. The words or sayings of the prophecy of the Apocalypse, on the contrary, are not to be sealed: for the epoch, once distant, is now at hand. We may accordingly expect to find in this book of the apostle John, when properly understood, the *end* referred to in the book of Daniel; and perhaps a proper application of the prophecies of Daniel to the



book of the Apocalypse may be equivalent to the *standing of that prophet in his lot at the end of days*; that is, the purport of his prophecies will be manifested to have its place, when and where the truths of the divine purpose of salvation by *grace* shall be fully exhibited.

We do not take *time*, however, apocalyptically, in a literal sense; the declaration, *There shall be time no longer*, (§ 230,) is to be borne in mind here as elsewhere; besides, it is now about eighteen hundred years since this time was said to be at hand. The construction we put upon the passage must be consistent therefore with the fact. In addition to this, we may notice that the word translated *time* in this place, (*καιρός*, season,) differs somewhat from that translated *time*, (*χρόνος*,) Rev. x. 6. The *season* is near—the opening, unsealing, and unveiling of that which was shut, is now *seasonable*, without any reference to the expiration of a chronological period. The developments of the Apocalypse are, to all preceding prophecies, that which a time of fulfilment is to the prediction; whenever, and wherever it may be that the disciple fully understands this revelation of Jesus Christ, then and there, to him, *the season is come*. Meanwhile, it is *near* in a more general sense, as the means of understanding, withheld from the prophet, are now within the reach of every follower of Jesus, through the medium especially of this portion of divine revelation.

§ 530. ‘He that is unjust, let him be unjust still,’—*Ὁ ἀδικῶν ἀδικησάτω*. This *verb* is uniformly rendered elsewhere in the Apocalypse by the term *hurt*; and, consistently with this rendering, the translation here should be, *the hurting, let him or it hurt still*; *nocens noceat adhuc*, (G. & L.) We have already given our reasons for supposing the expression *hurt* to signify, apocalyptically, an action the opposite of justifying, or of tending to justification, (§§ 56, 174.) We take it to apply to the tendency of doctrinal principles, the masculine article (*ὁ*) relating to *ὁ λόγος*, the saying or doctrine understood, (§ 507.) The doctrine, or any element of doctrine, operating against justification, let it do so still; that is, let it be manifested to do so.

The operation of the *second death* was the opposite of justification. It was to condemn, or cause condemnation, and it did so operate upon the beast, the false prophet, the accuser, and the systems death and hell. Tried by, and exposed to, the fire of the second death, they were manifested to be void of a principle of justification, or righteousness, and consequently to be wholly inconsistent with the divine plan of grace and mercy: and this manifestation continues, and will continue still. As the beast and false prophet are tried day and night for ever and ever, (Rev. xx. 10,) and as the smoke, or evidence of the torture of the elements devoted to the worship of the beast, ascendeth up for ever and ever, (§ 334,) the overcoming principle, *ὁ (λόγος) νικῶν*, on the contrary, is incapable of suffering from this second death, or from any thing thus tending to condemnation, (Rev. ii. 11;)

it cannot be *hurt* by it : so, while mercenary principles were to be tried in the *balances* of the judicial power—upon the black horse, (Rev. vi. 6)—the elements of sanctification and atonement (the oil and the wine) could not be *unjustified* or *hurt* by any of his operations. The power seated on the black horse may still be seen in operation ; but, his true character being exhibited, his weighing can only affect principles amenable to his legal standard, (§ 151.) The power of the four angels to *hurt* the earth and the sea may still continue, but they can do nothing to affect the elements of truth represented by the one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed ones of the twelve tribes ; neither does their power, we may presume, extend to the *new earth*, or the trees (the tree of life) of the new earth.

The power of these angels to hurt may be still exhibited, but it cannot affect any thing in the holy city, or any element peculiar to the new order of things ; for here there is no more death, (neither first nor second death,) neither sorrow, nor crying, nor pain. The power of the scorpion-bouists may still be manifested, but it must be manifested not to extend to the *unjustifying* of those having the seal of God in their forehead, (Rev. ix. 5.) The Euphratean horsemen may still *hurt*, but their power to unjustify is still manifested to be confined to the third of men, (Rev. ix. 19,) and none of these elements can be supposed to be found either in the holy city or in the new heaven and new earth, where there is no more a sea or threatening element. So, likewise, the same tendency to *hurt* or to oppose justification may continue to exist in the principles, represented by those opposed to the testimony of the two witnesses, (Rev. xi. 5 ;) but their true character being recognised, they cannot affect the principles of the economy of grace, represented either by the elements of the holy city or by the things of the new creation. The language of the text, however, is general. We refer to these examples of *hurting* only by way of illustration. At the same time, such being the use made of this Greek verb in all other parts of the Apocalypse, there seems to be no reason for giving it a different construction in this place. In the nature of the case all legal principles, or elements of the legal dispensation, must ever remain the same. That which is opposed to the justification of the sinner must always remain of the same character. “ The law worketh wrath,” (Rom. iv. 15,) and its tendency to *hurt*, (*ἀδικήσαι*;) or to operate against the justification of all offending in any *one point*, must necessarily be unchangeable.

§ 531. “ And he that is filthy, let him be filthy still ;” or, and the defiling, (principle,) let it defile still.—Here there is a difference in the Greek editions ; some of them employing the adjective *ῥυπαρός*, filthy, with the imperative passive *ῥυπαρευθήτω*, let him be filthy ; and others using the active present participle *ῥυπαῶν*, defiling, with the imperative active *ῥυπαοῦτω*,

let him, or it, defile. We prefer this latter, because it accords best with the active voice of the preceding verb, respecting which there is no difference: and applying it as we do to principles or doctrinal elements, unchangeable in their own nature, we find no inconsistency in the declaration that the doctrine or saying tending to defile, or to make filthy, will, and must ever continue to do so. If we suppose the expression to be applied to human beings, we should think otherwise, for we could hardly imagine the disciple, or the pretended disciple, or even the unbelieving, bidden to remain defiled, or to continue to defile.

The kind of filth of which the Greek term here employed is expressive, is primarily the accumulation of dirt arising from manual labour, to which persons engaged in dirty or filthy occupations are subjected. Metaphorically, the term is expressive of *sordid avarice*, *mean penuriousness*, such as that for which a miserly person may be distinguished, (Donnegan, art. *Πέπος*, and compounds.) Spiritually, we apply it to doctrines of which selfish and mercenary motives are the ruling principles. Principles of this character defile or render filthy all doctrines or doctrinal systems into which they insinuate themselves; and this they will ever do, notwithstanding the manifestation of the truth—the real character of these defiling principles may be exhibited, but it cannot be changed.

The same Greek term is used adjectively (James ii. 2) to express the *ragged* appearance of the poor man; his *vile raiment*; and (Zech. iii. 3. 4) it is applied to the *filthy* garments of the high priest, Joshua. As a noun, we meet with it Job xiv. 4, *Τίς γὰρ ἁθάρατος ἔσται ἄπὸ ῥύπου*; “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?” equivalent to the question, How can a sinner be justified by the unclean process of self-justification? So Job ix. 31, “If I wash myself in snow water, and make my hands ever so clean, yet thou shalt plunge me in the ditch, (*ἱκανὸς ἐν ῥύπῳ με ἔβαψας*, thou shalt plunge me in the defiling pit,) and my own flesh shall abhor me.” As if he had said, Whatever my pretensions to righteousness or to self-atonement might be, thou wouldst place me in that position which must exhibit my real defilement—this defilement being of the character alluded to by the prophet, (Is. lxiv. 6,) “All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we are as an unclean thing.” Of the sons and daughters of Z’ion (the misrepresented elements of the economy of grace) it is said, their filth, or defilement, shall be purged away, (Is. iv. 4,) and so, in the manifestation of that economy, in the heavenly Jerusalem, no defiling element is permitted to enter, (Rev. xxi. 27.) These elements themselves, nevertheless, remain, and must remain, wherever they are, of the same character—the defiling principle will ever defile. The only remedy for the elements of truth is an entire separation. As it is said, figuratively, in allusion to them, “Come



out, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing;" "Touch not, taste not, handle not."

§ 532. 'He that is righteous, let him be righteous still:' *justus justitium præstet adhuc*, (G. & L.)—the just, let him do justice still. If we were not assured by divine inspiration that there is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good and sinneth not; that there is none righteous, no not one; and if experience and self-examination did not confirm this divine testimony, we might suppose this sentence to apply to human beings in a literal sense, but with this authority of Scripture, and this knowledge of ourselves, we are constrained to look out for some other than a literal construction of the passage.

It is very evident that the two classes now calling for our notice are opposites of the two we have just commented upon. *Ὁ δίκαιος* must be the opposite of *ὁ ἀδίκωρ*, as the justifying principle is the opposite of that operating against that of justification. So, *δικαιοσύνην ποιῶν* (let him or it do or make righteousness) must be the opposite of *ἀδικήσας* (let him hurt.) As if it were said, The principle opposite to justification, let it continue to act, and let the principle tending to justification act. That is, let the tendency of both be manifested. To justify, in the scriptural sense of the term, is equivalent to *making* a righteousness where none would otherwise exist; as when Jehovah says, (Is. xlv. 13,) "I bring near my righteousness;" He maketh righteousness; as, also, when the prophet says, (Is. l. 8,) "He is near that justifieth me, who is he that condemneth?" So, in allusion to the same operation, it is said, (Is. xlv. 8,) "Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation; and let righteousness spring up together: I the Lord have created it," (made it.) It may be said that God made or created a righteousness, in bringing forth a plan of redemption by which he could justify the ungodly, (Rom. iv. 5.) Corresponding with this view of justification, every principle of the economy of grace may be contemplated as something doing or making righteousness, and consequently as something itself righteous or justified; as it is said, (1 John iii. 7,) *ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην δίκαιός ἐστι*—the person or principle making righteousness is righteous. Here in the Apocalypse we may suppose, as in the opposite case, in this verse *λόγος* (doctrine) to be understood. The doctrine tending to justification, through the imputed righteousness of Christ, is just, and when once manifested to be so will ever remain so manifested.

'And he that is holy, let him be holy still.'—We give a similar construction to this sentence—*ὁ ἅγιος*, the consecrated, or set apart, is the opposite in this connection of *ὁ ἡμιῶρ*, the defiling. The elements (*οἱ λόγοι*) of the economy of grace, are the consecrated principles. Let these remain set apart, and remain so manifested. In their own nature they must separate from those opposed to them. But it seems to be implied that

they are not only to be thus separated in fact, they are to be exhibited in this new state of things in their distinct position. The time of the harvest we may suppose to be now come, when the wheat is to be discriminated from the tares, and this discrimination is to be made manifest. The whole of this verse may be supposed to have reference to the sayings (οἱ λόγοι) of this book just spoken of as not to be sealed, on account of the immediate coming of the time of development.

What we have said elsewhere (§ 88) of the term holiness as a characteristic of position, or as a quality, and of the different Greek terms rendered by this English word, might be repeated here; but we do not suppose the term ὁ ἅγιος to be intended to apply here to human beings, none of whom pretend to a perfect holiness of their own; and the passage certainly does not admit of the application to something partly holy and partly not holy. There is no partial sanctification in the objects or elements contemplated—they are things entirely set apart, or not so in any degree.

Vs. 12, 13. And behold, I come quickly; and my reward (is) with me. to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

Ἰδοὺ, ἔρχομαι ταχέ, καὶ ὁ μισθός μου μετ' ἐμοῦ, ἀποδοῦναι ἐκάστῳ ὡς τὸ ἔργον αὐτοῦ ἔσται. Ἰγὼ τὸ Α καὶ τὸ Ω, πρῶτος καὶ ἔσχατος, ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος.

§ 533. 'And behold.'—The conjunction καὶ (and) is not in all the editions of the Greek, and seems to be correctly omitted, unless the words, 'saith the Lord,' be understood at the commencement of the verse; for the messenger, declaring himself to be the fellow-servant of John, would not assume the title of Alpha and Omega. Different voices we apprehend to be speaking here alternately. The vision of the Bride is closed, and the apostle, with his heavenly interpreter, is restored to the position occupied prior to being taken *in spirit* to the great and high mountain, (Rev. xxi. 9.) The scene to be imagined is such as it then was. The great white throne, the new heaven, and the new earth, and the new Jerusalem, are all supposed to be in view. The angel now gives the apostle an account of the authority by which he had been directed, in all that he had done and said, respecting the things *shortly* to be done. A voice from the throne here utters the words, in allusion to what has just been said, "Behold, *I* come quickly," (shortly.) The apostle then gives us an account of his mistaken act of adoration which calls forth the caution and admonitory warning of the angel, from the 9th to the end of the 11th verse. The voice from the throne now again repeats the announcement, "Behold, *I* come quickly," &c., followed by an admonitory address, extending as far as the first clause of the 20th verse; this concluding address, from *the first and the last*, serving the purpose of an application of the whole subject.

'I come quickly.'—We have already considered this *coming* quickly or suddenly equivalent to the things being *shortly* done, mentioned in the 6th

verse: we are here, however, further informed who it is that comes quickly, viz., he who styles himself "Alpha and Omega." By comparing this information with what is said in the preceding chapter, (v. 5, 6,) we find "Alpha and Omega" to be Him that sat upon the throne; and, taking into view the language of Him that sat on the throne, (in the 7th verse of the same chapter,) we perceive Alpha and Omega to be, also, God. It is, therefore, God himself that cometh quickly; and this, we suppose, in the sense of *manifestation*, by some peculiar revelation or development of truth; for, of the Deity, strictly speaking, it is said that He dwelleth in light inaccessible, (ὁὼς ἀπρόσβλεπτος,) "whom no man hath seen, or can see." According to our construction, the coming of the Bride is equivalent to the coming of the Lamb, and the coming of the Lamb is equivalent to the coming of "Alpha and Omega," the beginning and ending. In other words, the complete revelation of the economy of grace, (the things which are to be suddenly,) is equivalent, in a spiritual sense, to the coming of Christ; and, in the same sense, is equivalent to the coming of God: that is, the Deity is manifested in the manifestation of his truth, as declared in the words of Jesus himself: "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father;"—the same advent which is spoken of in the New Testament as the coming of Christ, (2 Thess. i. 7, 10,) being spoken of in the Old Testament as the coming of the Lord God, (Ps. l. 1-6,) corresponding with the declaration, (Rev. i. 7, 8,) that he who cometh in the *clouds* (§§ 17, 18) is "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the *Almighty*."

'And my reward (is) with me, to give every man—or to give to *each*, as the work of him or it shall be.'—The word translated *reward*, ὁ μισθός, is, in many places of the New Testament, rendered *wages*, or *hire*, which is its proper signification. The householder or contractor, who comes forth with the means of paying his hired servants or labourers the wages due to them, may be said to come, and his *reward* with him. The work performed may be of a good or bad character, and the recompense to be received may be of a desirable or of an undesirable kind; still the idea to be associated with the term is that of an exact equivalent for what has been done. In Latin, it is expressed by *merces*, whence our term *mercenary* is derived. The adjective, Μισθιος, signifies hired, to be hired, mercenary, venal; which signification is to be associated with all the compounds of the word, as Μισθαγορος, one who works for hire, a mercenary, (Donnegan.) He that worketh receiveth *wages*, says our Saviour, (John iv. 36,) alluding to the universal rule of compensation. To him that worketh, says Paul, (Rom iv. 4,) the hire, or wages earned, is not accounted a matter of grace, but, on the contrary, it is a *debt*, a compensation not to be withheld without an act of injustice: as James v. 4, "Behold, the *hire* of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud."



We cannot suppose the *reward* mentioned in this passage of the Apocalypse to be that of the *wages*, or hire, of human beings. The wages or reward of sin is death. Sin is the transgression of the law. He that transgresses one commandment of the law, is guilty of the whole. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves; consequently all are sinners, and all, when rewarded according to their works, must receive the *wages* of sin, which is death. Consistently, however, with our uniform construction of this book of Revelation, we think this reward or hire applies to principles, elements of doctrine, and not to human beings. As it is said of works, 1 Cor. iii. 13, "Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a *reward*. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." In the season of trial, the work which is incapable of abiding the test is to be destroyed, but not the man. If the work or doctrine be correct, its reward is the manifestation of its correctness.

As in remarking upon Rev. xi. 18, (§ 262,) we suppose doctrines or principles of doctrine to be personified as men, although the word man or men is not here expressly employed. That no man is saved by works, (Eph. ii. 9,) is so repeatedly and expressly set forth in other portions of Scripture that there can be no possibility of mistaking that position, and we must presume every doctrine taught in the Apocalypse to be consistent with it. If no man can be saved by his works, still less can his works entitle him to *hire*, compensation, wages, or reward;\* neither can we suppose the Supreme Being to have occasion of a day or of an hour when He is to determine whether this or that man be a sinner or not; or whether this or that human being be less of a sinner than another: to imagine this would be to imagine something entirely inconsistent with all that is revealed in Scripture of the omniscience of God. So far as the language of the Apocalypse is concerned we think, therefore, there can be no hazard in considering the *reward* in question to be that of a manifestation of the truth or falsehood of all doctrines and principles of doctrine; a manifestation probably effected through the just construction of the written word of revelation, comprehending that law and testimony by which every work, and device, and doctrine

\* The most faithful disciple is but an unprofitable servant, he can do more than it is his duty to do, (Luke xvi. 10.) As Paul says of himself, (1 Cor. ix. 16,) "Though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me: yea, wo is unto me if I preach not the gospel!" His preaching was nothing more than the performance of a duty; and if he had neglected to preach, this neglect would have been the absolute transgression of a command. If the apostle then could not pretend to a reward or recompense from God for his works, what reason is there for supposing the pretensions of others in this respect to be well founded?

are to be tried as by a chemical test, the coming with reward being identic with the coming as by fire, as elsewhere described.

\* I am Alpha and Omega,' &c.—We have already commented upon this annunciation. The importance of its introduction here appears to be that it identifies the present speaker with him who sat upon the white throne, (Rev. xxi. 6;) with him who declares himself to be the Almighty, (Rev. i. 8;) and with him whose voice, as of a trumpet, directed the apostle (Rev. i. 11) to write all that he has written in this book, and to send it to the seven churches of Asia.

Vs. 14, 15. Blessed (are) they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without (are) dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.\*

Μακάριοι οἱ ποιοῦντες τὰς ἐντολάς αὐτοῦ, ἵνα ἔσται ἡ ἐξουσία αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τοῖς πυλῶσιν εἰσέλθωσιν εἰς τὴν πόλιν. Ἰξῶ οἱ κύνεις καὶ οἱ φαρμακοὶ καὶ οἱ πόρνοι καὶ οἱ φονεῖς καὶ οἱ εἰδωλολάτραι καὶ πᾶς ὁ φιλῶν καὶ ποιῶν ψεῦδος.

§ 535. "Blessed are they,' &c.—This declaration, taken in a literal sense, would imply that there is a certain portion of mankind who do all the commandments of God, and who, accordingly, by their perfect obedience acquire a right to participate of the tree of life. We have said enough, however, to show why we do not and cannot take these words in a literal sense; if the reading be correct as above, we suppose those doing the commandments in the sense of the text, to be elements of doctrine in strict conformity with the truths of the economy of grace—principles admissible into that economy, and forming constituent parts of it; corresponding with such as we suppose allowed to enter the gates, (§ 507,) admitted by the angels at the gates, (§ 485,) and probably identic with the one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed ones; their right, or rather power, (ἐξουσία,) to the tree of life, consisting in their correspondence with the truth represented as the tree of life. As we might say of such doctrines, that all belonging to the divine plan of salvation must correspond with the representation, that the imputed righteousness of Christ is the only element of eternal life. It would be a mere truism to say of human beings, that it would be well for them, or that they would be happy, if they kept the commandments of God. If Paul could have hoped for happiness in this way, he would not have said of himself, as well as of others, "when the commandment came sin revived, and I died."

The term rendered commandment, or commandments, occurs in no other place of the Apocalypse connected with the verb *to do*, (ποιέω,) but it is

\* These two verses appear to be the interlocutory response as of a chorus, although they may be taken for the words of the apostle, or of the angel; but the expression, *his* commandments instead of *my* commandments, appears intended to show that they are not directly the language of Him who declares himself to be *Alpha and Omega*.

found in two other places with the verb *to keep*, (τηρέω.) The dragon and the accuser made war with those keeping the commandments of God, and having the testimony of Jesus, the remnant of the seed of the woman clothed with the sun, (§ 291 ;) and those that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus are also spoken of, Rev. xiv. 12, apparently as exercising patience, (§ 336.) In both these cases, we have considered the keeping in the sense of custody ; and the personification, that of principles, keeping as watchmen, sentinels, or guards, the true elements of the plan of salvation by grace. This personification we suppose to be preserved throughout the whole book, and accordingly feel no hesitation in giving to the expression, “*do his commandments*,” a construction similar to that of *keeping* his commandments. Here, those doing the commandments of God are said to do them that they may enter by the gates into the city, as well as have *power* over the tree of life. The two powers are apparently equivalent figures of the same privilege, indicating the congeniality of character between the elements entering *by the gate* and the city, and between the elements having power over the tree and the tree itself ; as the good shepherd (John x. 1) enters *by the door* into the fold, while the thief or robber climbs over the wall. The congenial element has the freedom of the city ; and, by the same token, has power over or upon the tree of life.\*

\* Some editions of the Greek, instead of the words ποιῶντες τὰς ἐντολάς, *doing the commandments*, have the words πλύνοντες τὰς στολὰς, *washing the robes*. Such is the reading preferred by Lachman, and said to be that of the Alexandrine version ; it is also followed by Wiclif, “Blessid be thei that waischen her stoolis : in the blood of the Lambe that the power of hem be in the tree of liif and enter bi the gatis in to the citee, for with outen forth houndis and wicchis and unchast men and manquellers, and serynge to idols and ech that loveth and makith lesinge.” So the Rheims version, “Blessed are they that wash their stoles,” &c. The Greek words and letters in the two readings so nearly resemble each other, that the mistake of transcribers of manuscripts in the first instance may very innocently have been made, and the different readings once introduced, it depended upon other copyists to prefer the expression most in conformity with their own peculiar opinions. The transcriber influenced by legal views, without attending to the mere truism of the proposition in an ordinary sense, preferred the construction setting forth a happiness consisting in *keeping the commandments* ; the more evangelical transcriber preferred that which placed the same happiness in the efficacy of the Saviour’s atonement. If we interpreted the passage literally, we should certainly prefer the last reading, as most consistent with the whole tenor of divine revelation. But looking upon the expression as altogether of a spiritual and figurative character, we do not consider it of much importance which reading is adopted. The elements personified as disciples *washing their robes*, must represent principles assimilated by this process to the city and to the tree ; the privilege they possess, therefore, is a result of congeniality of character. Whether as disciples *keeping the commandments* of God, or as disciples *washing their robes* in the blood of the Lamb, they represent doctrinal elements according with the character of the city and tree, and therefore possessing the power to enter the gates of one, and to participate of the fruit of the other. The city is a figure, and the gate is a figure, and therefore whatever enters by the gate into the city must be a figure



§ 536. 'For without are dogs and sorcerers,' &c.—These characters, with the exception of the first, we have already remarked upon (§§ 477, 478) as principles of false doctrine working abomination, and making a lie, (Rev. xxi. 27 :) on that account not permitted to enter the city, and for the same reason subjected to the never-ending trial of the second death—the trial as by unquenchable fire; the two figures (exclusion from the city, and everlasting trial or torture in the lake) being nearly convertible symbols—as we may say, to be excluded from the city is to be cast into the lake, and to be cast into the lake is to be excluded from the city.

The appellation *dogs* is very generally admitted to be figurative, but it is as generally almost literalized by being considered figurative of human beings of a shameless character. In a spiritual sense, however, we construe the term more exactly: we suppose dogs here, as well as sorcerers, &c., to represent doctrinal principles; and we take the character of the principles represented by these animals more especially from the habits of these animals in eastern countries in respect to their *food*. The dogs of Western Asia are scarcely domesticated: in the cities and towns they herd together, and are almost as ferocious as wild beasts. They are regarded as unclean animals, and as outcasts amongst animals; and, having for the most part neither homes or masters, they subsist upon every species of offal coming in their way; generally preferring carrion, and vile and putrid animal substances, to attacking and killing other animals for food.\* Thus, subsisting in preference upon unclean aliment, they represent, we think, principles specially of a self-righteous character; the dogs of the Apocalypse, as *elements* of doctrine, corresponding in character with the *teachers* of false doctrine, alluded to, Phil. iii. 2, under the same appellation. We do not imagine an essential difference between the doctrines represented by these excluded characters: they are all of them rather so many different figures of the same false principles; a self-righteous principle or doctrine, in its different relations, being in effect a dog, a sorcerer, a whoremonger or adulterer, a murderer, an idolater, and a thing defiling, working abomination, and making and loving a lie, in the sense already attached to these expressions.

so the tree is a figure, and the fruit of the tree is a figure, and therefore whatever has power over the tree is a figure. We have no authority for taking part of the representation in a figurative, and part in a literal sense.

\* Dogs licked the blood of Naboth and Ahab, and devoured the body of Jezebel, 1 Kings xxi. 19, and xxii. 38. Amongst the Hebrews, the unburied carcasses of criminals appear to have been left a prey to dogs, as part of the sentence passed upon them. They may be considered, in this light, instruments of judicial vengeance: "The sword to slay, and the dogs to tear," Jer. xv. 3; "Dogs have compassed me," said David;—"Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog," (Ps. xxii. 20.) That which was holy, or set apart, was not to be given to dogs, (Matt. vii. 6 :) while flesh torn by beasts was not to be eaten by the Israelites; it was to be cast to the dogs, (Ex. xxii. 31.)

## ADDRESS OF JESUS.

Vs. 16, 17. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, (and) the bright and morning-star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Ἐγὼ Ἰησοῦς ἔπεμψα τὸν ἄγγελόν μου μαρτυρῆσαι ὑμῖν ταῦτα ἐπὶ ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις· ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ῥίζα καὶ τὸ γένος Δαβὶδ, ὁ ἀστὴρ ὁ λαμπρὸς ὁ πρωϊνός. Καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ νύμφη λέγουσιν· ἔρχου. καὶ ὁ ἀκούων εἰπάτω· ἔρχου. καὶ ὁ διψῶν ἐρχέσθω, ὁ θέλων λαβέτω ὕδωρ ζωῆς δωρεάν.

§ 537. ‘I Jesus have sent,’ &c.—In the sixth verse of this chapter it is said, “the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.” It is now as expressly declared, that the angel was sent by Jesus. The inference, therefore, is unavoidable, that Jesus and the Lord God of the holy prophets are different appellations of the same Being, the same source of truth. This book of Revelation, or rather the revelation itself, as it was made to the apostle, may be figuratively termed an angel or messenger; Jesus, therefore, may be said to reveal himself, in this messenger or message, as by an angel.

The same Jesus who was declared to be the Lamb of God, (John i. 29, 36,) and who, as the Lamb, is revealed to us occupying the throne or seat of God, is here declared to be the Lord God of the prophets; and the same Jesus who is called (Rev. i. 5) the faithful and true witness, testifies or bears witness in this revelation as through the instrumentality of a messenger. The same Jesus who first exhibited himself to the apostle in this vision, in the midst of the golden candlesticks, as one like unto the Son of Man, (Rev. i. 13,) afterwards reveals himself as the Lamb opening the sealed book, and consequently as the author of the whole revelation resulting from that opening. At the same time, as the Word of God, this Jesus is revealed in the rider of the white horse; first, as going forth to overcome, (Rev. vi. 2,) and subsequently as actually overcoming, (Rev. xix. 20, 21;) lastly, he reveals himself in the person of his bride, the holy city.

The name Jesus signifying the *Saviour*, God the Saviour must be Him by whom the angel here spoken of is sent; or, rather, dropping the figure of the angel, God the Saviour is the author of this revelation, as the book is entitled the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him, (Rev. i. 1;) so we may say God reveals himself in this book as the Anointed, the *only* Saviour, for there is none other. God was, *in Christ*, reconciling the world

unto himself. The whole testimony of the book is immediately from God. This declaration, “I Jesus,” &c., is equivalent to a seal or signature affixed to the whole instrument. God in Christ, manifest in the flesh, appeared to the apostles and others of their time, as one like unto the Son of man. In the Apocalypse he reveals himself as the Lamb, the Word, the Bride, and the Holy City; the bride being the image or representation of her husband, (the Lamb,) and the holy city being the representation in detail of all that is to be understood of the word or purpose of God.

‘To testify these things in the churches;’ or, rather, *upon* or *concerning* the churches, ἐπὶ τὰς ἐκκλησίας, (§ 234;) the seven churches of Asia, to which the book is inscribed, being put for the *whole*, or for the seven parts of a whole. These churches we have supposed to represent so many assemblages of doctrine, each affected by certain peculiar errors; the errors of the seven comprising, as figures, perhaps all erroneous views incident to matters of Christian faith or doctrine. In the introductory epistles these errors are directly reformed. In the subsequent revelation they are indirectly set forth by allegorical representations, in which true and false systems are contrasted with that which alone is true. The whole testimony borne in these representations may be said to be *concerning* the churches, because, although not expressly declared, it is intended to correct the errors to which those systems were subject.

But whether we render ἐνὶ by *concerning* or *in*, the expression confines the testimony spoken of to matters of Christian doctrine; it is something in or concerning the Christian system, and is not intended for application out of that system. Errors in the churches, and not out of the churches, are the subject of reprehension; and the illustrations of the truth as it is in Jesus are intended for those already nourished with the *milk* of the word, and now supposed capable of receiving stronger food. On the other hand, as the Apocalypse is not addressed to those out of the church, it is addressed to all in the church, without restriction of time or place, age, denomination, sect, or country; all naming the name of Jesus, whether human beings or systems of faith, come within the sphere of the *totality* designated by the number *seven*.

§ 538. ‘I am the root and the offspring of David.’\*—The root and that which springs from the root, together, must constitute the whole plant. The expression, therefore, is equivalent to the declaration, I am the spiritual David; the terms *root* and *offspring* being both understood in a spiritual sense. Here, then, is that root of Jesse of which it is said, (Isa.

\* The angel just spoken of having discharged his functions, that figure may now be considered as dismissed; Jesus speaking in this and in the subsequent verses in his own proper person.



xi. 10,) "It shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his *rest* shall be glorious." Here, too, there is that offspring of the same root, of which it is said, (Is. xi. 1,) "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." Of this offspring it is also predicted, that "he shall judge the poor and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." Such reproof, and such action of the mouth and lips, we suppose to be administered by Jesus in this revelation.

To the same root and stem, stock and offspring, beginning and ending, we apply the prediction, (Zech. iii. 8, and vi. 12, 13,) "Behold, I will bring forth my servant *the Branch*, (Sept. ἡ ἀνατολή, *the rising*;) and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall set and rule upon his throne, and he shall be a priest upon his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." So Is. liii. 1, 2, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground. He hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him;"—this being the same root of which we are assured, as above, His *rest* shall be glorious.

In the offspring or race of David we meet with the seed or fruit of the woman which was to bruise the serpent's head, depriving the accuser of its power, and sin of its sting, and death or condemnation of its prey, by his own vicarious fulfilment of the law. In this anointed, consecrated root, we meet too with the parent stock of *the good olive tree*, (Rom. xi. 16,) from which, as engrafted branches, the disciple derives the unction of divine holiness; as it is said, if the root be holy, so are the branches; and (John xv. 4, 5) "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing;" the imputed merits of Christ being to the adopted disciple as the fruit of the tree is to its branches. In allusion to this arrangement of sovereign grace it is said, (Is. lx. 21,) "Thy people shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land for ever, the *branch* of my planting, the work of my hands, that *I* may be glorified;" the fruit borne by this adopted or engrafted branch being, as we apprehend, the imputed merits or righteousness of Christ, the purchased inheritance alluded to Eph. i. 14.

'The bright (and) morning-star;' or, the resplendent early morning-star, ὁ ἀστὴρ ὁ λαμπρὸς ὁ πρωϊνός, or ὁ ῥοδιός, according to some editions. I shall see him, but not now, said Balaam; I shall behold him, but not nigh. There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall arise out of Israel,

(Numbers xxiv. 17 :) so, 2 Peter ii. 19, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy : whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts." This day dawn we suppose to be the manifestation of the truth, and the rising of the day-star to be a figure equivalent to the exhibition of Jesus as "the Lord our righteousness," our *light*, and our salvation : the *φωσφόρος* or light-bearer of Peter being put for the dawn of a spiritual revelation.\* Christ, at the time of writing this Epistle, had been already manifest on earth, and his truth was already being taught by the preaching of the Gospel throughout the world. But the spiritual understanding was still wanting : Christians were yet to see Jesus, as the Sun of righteousness, even of their righteousness, and as such he here unfolds himself ; corresponding with the construction we have elsewhere put upon the figure of light, (§ 504,) the glory of moral perfection. As it is said, (Ps. xcvii. 11,) Light is sown for the righteous ; or, as we understand it, a righteousness is prepared or made for the justified (in Christ).

We had occasion to notice, (§ 83,) in the introductory Epistles, the promise of Jesus to the overcoming, *ὁ νικῶν*, I will give him the morning-star, (Rev. ii. 28 :) which assurance we have applied to an overcoming principle, considering it equivalent to the promise of a manifest identity with Christ. He is the Star, and he promises to give himself to the overcoming—that is, he promises *identity* : as he prays for his disciples, (John xvii. 22,) that they may be one with him ; that, in the sight of God, they may be accounted identic with him. This promise we suppose to be now apocalyptically fulfilled. The word of God overcame. The word of God is the purpose of God to save by imputed righteousness. This purpose of God is set forth at large under the figure of the New Jerusalem or bride. The bride or Lamb's wife is identic with the Lamb ; the Lamb is Jesus, and Jesus is the morning-star ; thus the word of God or economy of grace are identic with the star, and Jesus gives himself to, or identifies himself with, the purpose of sovereign grace—one is exhibited and seen in the other.

§ 539. 'And the Spirit and the bride,' &c.—The apostle does not say *I heard* the Spirit and the bride say, Come ; it is Jesus himself who is still the speaker. Having announced that he had in the preceding revelation

\* The king of Babylon is also styled by the prophet (Is. xiv. 12) *Lucifer*, or light-bearer ; and *son of the morning*, according to our common version, (Sept. *ἑωσφόρος*, or morning-bearer ; and *πρὸς ἀνατολὴν*, the early rising, or the twilight of the rising : "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning !") But this we suppose to be a sarcastic allusion to the presumptuous pretensions of the Babylonish monarch, who himself serves in prophecy as a figure corresponding with the seven-headed beast of Revelation, and the man of sin in the Epistles ; the Babylonish pretender claiming to be the morning-star, as the beast and the man of sin pretend to make themselves equal with God.

testified of the things of his kingdom, through the instrumentality of an angel, he next announces himself as the spiritual David, and the spiritual Morning Star; and having thus revealed himself, he now declares what the Spirit and the bride say—that is, he declares the use and purport of the preceding development, viz., that it is equivalent to an urgent invitation or exhortation, addressed to all who read it, to a participation in the means of redemption as represented.

The spirit here spoken of we suppose to be the spirit of this Apocalypse, elsewhere (Eph. i. 17) termed “the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ;” the spirit by which, or in which, John was enabled to witness *the day of the Lord*, (§ 24;) the spirit by which, or in which, the apostle beheld the heavenly scene described in the fourth chapter of the book, and indeed in all the subsequent chapters; the spirit by which, and in which, he was carried to the top of the mountain, and to the wilderness; the spirit explaining the nature of the blessedness enjoyed by those dying in the Lord, (Rev. xiv. 13;) the spirit, in fine, which all the seven churches were especially called upon to hear—*what the spirit says* being the spiritual meaning of what is said or represented. On this occasion the spirit is mentioned as uniting with the bride with one voice in giving the invitation. We are not told that the Spirit says, Come, and the bride says, Come; but the Spirit and the bride together say, Come. They together constitute the party giving the invitation.

The bride, of whom so much is said in the last two chapters, is not mentioned in the preceding portion of the Apocalypse, except on one occasion, (Rev. xix. 7–9,) where she is said to have made herself ready for the marriage feast, (§ 425.) The Spirit, on the contrary, as we have seen, is to be recognized in all that is revealed; his first work having been the preparatory operation of setting forth the errors opposed to an understanding of the truth; which preparation we may consider equivalent to the bride’s making herself ready. His last work is that of setting forth the truth, in the spiritual understanding of all that is said of the bride or holy city; and this last, the New Jerusalem, is the bride; so that it might have been said here, The Spirit and the New Jerusalem say, Come.

The New Jerusalem consists of a collection of various symbolical figures illustrating the principal features of the divine economy of grace. The figures, however, alone would explain nothing: it is the spirit or spiritual understanding with the figures which affords the illustration; the two together unite in exhibiting the plan of divine mercy, and thus, as with one voice, give the invitation to participate in that provision of mercy;—the call being particularly addressed to those under the influence of erroneous views, who are now besought to choose the only way of salvation; as it is said of *true wisdom*, (Prov. ix. 1–6,) She hath prepared her feast; she hath sent



forth her invitations ; she crieth upon the high places of the city, *Come*, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled ; forsake the foolish (way) and live, and go in the *way* of understanding.

The Spirit and the bride in this revelation virtually say, *Come* ; as the cities of refuge, with their open gates and their guide-posts *virtually* said, *Come*, to the man-slayer in need of the asylum ; the word, or sovereign purpose of God, (the city,) inviting to fly for refuge ; and this word, or purpose, identic as it is with Christ, giving its invitation by a figurative exhibition of itself, accompanied with a spiritual understanding. The Spirit and the New Jerusalem say, *Come* ; in other words, the economy of grace, unfolded to the spiritual understanding, says, “Come, for all things are ready.” As a table, spread with rich dainties, virtually says to the beholder, *Come* ; so the rich provision of divine mercy here displayed says to the disciple, in the language of the Psalmist, “Come, taste and see that the Lord is good ; blessed is the man that trusteth in him.” A blind confidence in means of redemption vaguely set forth, is not required ; the whole plan is exhibited, that the trust or confidence of the disciple may be won or gained by it. The lofty walls of the city, with their twelve garnished foundations, the pearly gates, the angelic guards, the golden streets, the endless day, the ample supply of living water, and the fruit and leaf of the tree of life, (together representing the whole body of written revelation upon the same subject,) all say, as with one voice, *Come*. This voice we suppose to be the voice of the Comforter, while the precious invitation corresponds also with that of Jesus himself : “Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

§ 540. ‘And let him that heareth say, *Come*.’—It is not said, Let him that heareth, come, but let him *say*, *Come* ; the language being still that of Jesus himself. He tells the *hearer* that the Spirit and the bride say, *Come*, which is equivalent to announcing his own invitation. Having done this, he directs the *hearer* what to say in his turn—“Let him that heareth say, *Come*.” This we must connect with the previously repeated declarations of Jesus of his coming quickly. The invitation of Jesus by the voice of the Spirit and the bride is addressed to the hearer ; and the invitation which the hearer is instructed to give is addressed to Jesus, as he is here understood to announce his own coming : “Let him that heareth (understandeth) say, *Come*, Lord, come quickly.”

This, we think, is the easiest construction to be put upon the expression. But, instead of this, the hearer may be contemplated in the light of a messenger, to whom a direction is given to communicate what is said to others ; in which case the invitation of the hearer, like that of the Spirit and the bride, would be directed to disciples, and not to the Lord. The style of the Apocalypse, however, and its general construction as a composition, somewhat of a dramatic character, justifies, we think, the supposition that th

language of the *hearer* is intended to be a *response* to that of the voice of the Spirit and the bride.

However this may be, the hearing in question is something more than a mere apprehension of words and phrases, whether communicated orally or in writing. It must apply to a certain recognition of the spiritual sense of what is thus communicated ; as it is said at the conclusion of each of the *introductory addresses*, (§ 46,) “ He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” Corresponding with this, we may suppose he that hath an ear to hear having heard, he is now directed what to say ; that is, to say with the apostle, as at the close of this chapter, “ Even so, *come*, Lord Jesus.” The disciple, accordingly, after he has gone through with the testimony of Jesus, furnished in this revelation, may judge in some degree whether he has heard or not, in the apocalyptic sense of the term, by his disposition to obey the direction here given ; and by the readiness with which he can respond to the annunciation of the Saviour, “ Behold, I come quickly,” (suddenly,) “ Even so, Lord, come.”

As we were before told that the marriage feast was come, (Rev. xix. 7,) and that the wife having received her nuptial array, had made herself ready ; as her appearance was next described to be that of a wife adorned, or decorated, apparently for the feast, which we have supposed to be equivalent to a manifestation of the union ; and as she here with the Spirit gives the invitation, *Come*, we may presume the feast thus anticipated to be now before us. In connection with this figure, *him that heareth* may be supposed to occupy the place of the friend of the bridegroom ; such a friend presiding, according to the Hebrew custom, as a ruler of the feast, inviting and attending to the guests. Thus the direction given to the ruler of the feast to say, *Come*, is equivalent to a general notice that every thing is now ready ; it remains only for the guests to take the places assigned them. Under this construction, all whose duty or privilege it is in any way to promulgate the truths of the gospel, may be said to exercise the functions of the friend of the bridegroom. They give the invitation, *Come* ; and they give it as the Spirit and the bride have given it here ; that is, by setting forth the economy of grace itself. What is said of the teachers may be equally said of the doctrines taught : if they exhibit the divine purpose of redemption as a rich provision of sovereign mercy, their language is that of invitation, *Come*.

Contemplating this marriage feast, however, as a manifestation simply, it will be sufficient for us to consider these invitations as designating the completion of that development of truth, which may be said to constitute the coming of the Lord.

§ 541. ‘ And let him that is athirst come ;’ or, let *the thirsting* come. —Not let him *say*, come, but let him come ; precisely the same invitation as was given by Jesus himself when manifest in the flesh, (John vii. 37 :) ‘ If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.’ So Matt. v. 6,



“Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” The verb *Ἀπείω*, to thirst, is to be understood in all these passages in the strongest sense of the term; expressing not merely an inclination to drink, but a vehement desire, a famishing with thirst—an apprehension of perishing, if the means of quenching this thirst be not immediately supplied. So the adjective *Ἰψυος*, used metaphorically, signifies *parched, arid, dry*, (Donnegan.) In this sense the means of supplying the thirst alluded to in this passage comprehends the whole means of eternal life, that without which the sinner must perish forever. Of the two figures, hunger and thirst, the last is here used for both; and the means of supplying this want may be considered equivalent to the supply of every want pertaining to the salvation of the soul. The case of the sufferer, in this spiritual sense, is analogous to that of the children of Israel in their way to the promised land: wandering in the wilderness, they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them; then they cried unto the Lord, and he led them by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation, (Ps. cvii. 5, 6.) Such a city, represented by the new Jerusalem, and all its abundant means of comfort and security, is now comprehended under the single symbol of the one indispensable aliment of life and cleanliness; and the right way, before symbolized by the city, is now spoken of as the way, or rather, as the act of coming to a never-failing spring.

‘And whosoever *will*, let him take of the water of life *freely* ;’\* or, the *willing* (the desiring) let him take, &c.—As we have said of thirsting, so we say of the term rendered *will* in this place; it is not merely a non-refusal, a mere assent or consent, but it is a desire, a wish. The verbs in both cases are employed in the active form, and we may say there is no merely passive idea to be associated with them—*θελω* signifying sometimes even *eagerly*, (as Æschyl. Choe. 791, quoted by Donnegan.) So the verb is used, Rev. xi. 5, 6, in the sense of seeking to accomplish a desired object.

This water of life we suppose to be a figure of all that is requisite for eternal happiness, all that is otherwise represented by the holy city; and this *all* we take to be comprehended in the atonement—the vicarious propitiation of the Son of God. A city paved with gold, the whole structure of which is garnished with diamonds and precious stones, must be of no value as a habitation, without a supply of water. So it is the river of the water of life, proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb, which gives to the new Jerusalem its characteristic feature of a city to dwell in; as it is also the propitiation of Christ\* which gives to the whole economy of grace its characteristic adaptation to the circumstances and wants of the disciple.

\* The adverb *δωρεάν*, translated *freely*, is rendered, John xv. 25, *without cause*. It is from a noun, *δωρεά*, signifying a gift or present; something freely granted by the donor, and wholly undeserved by the recipient.



It is the cleansing efficacy of the atonement of Jesus which enables his followers to participate in every other benefit conferred by sovereign grace : it is this, indeed, which brings them into the position of such participation ; the blessedness of him whose transgressions are forgiven covering, we may say, the whole ground of eternal happiness. To take of the water of life is, then, to partake of the marriage feast—to accept of the means of salvation offered in the gospel : one simple figure put for the whole. To take of the water of life, is to cast one's self entirely for redemption upon the merits of Christ ; trusting for acceptance with God, solely to a participation in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus.

This participation is now offered, and what is peculiar in the offer is, that the benefit to be conferred is *freely* given, *gratis*, entirely as a gift ; no equivalent being exacted for it, no condition being prescribed ;—corresponding with the language of Paul, Rom. iii. 24, “ Being justified *freely* by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” The only question we have to ask is, To whom is the offer made ? and the answer is, To all desiring to obtain the favour. The invitation to drink is to all who are thirsty ; the offer of the life-giving supply is to all who feel their need of it, and *desire* to partake of it.

There may be those who thirst, but who do not *desire to take* of the proffered supply ; they feel their want, but they prefer depending upon other resources. There is within them a proud spirit of self justification and vainglory, which speaks to them in the language ascribed to the king of Assyria, Is. xxxvi. 16 : “ Make with me a covenant, and come out with me ; and eat ye every one of his vine, and every one of his fig-tree ; and drink ye every one of the waters of his *own cistern*.”

With the atonement of Jesus before them, they prefer seeking out some propitiation of their own providing : an almost unaccountable perversity, alluded to by the prophet, (Jer. ii. 12, 13 :) “ Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord : for my people have committed two evils ; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters,” (rejecting the atonement of Christ,) “ and have hewed out for them cisterns,” (in devising means of propitiation of their own,) “ broken cisterns, which can hold no water.”

There are others, however, who both *thirst* (feel their need of an atoning sacrifice) and earnestly desire (will) to partake of the proffered benefit : “ As the hart panteth after the water-brooks,” says David, “ so panteth my soul after thee, O God ! My soul *thirsteth* for God ; for the living God,” (Ps. xlii. 1, 2 ;) “ O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee. My soul *thirsteth* for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is,” (Ps. lxiii. 1, 2.)

This thirsting *for God*, as expressed in the Psalms, we presume to be the thirsting and desiring of the Apocalypse ; corresponding with the chain

of identity already alluded to. The river of the water of life (the means of atonement) being the distinguishing element of the holy city, (the divine purpose of grace,) the holy city or bride being identic with the Lamb, and the Lamb identic with God, to thirst for God is equivalent to thirsting for the water of life.

§ 542. The words of the last two verses, we suppose to be addressed directly to every human being interested in the great salvation, constituting the subject of this revelation. The veil is now laid aside, and Jesus no longer speaks through his angel; what he says, accordingly, is to be taken as directed to all his followers—to all *who look for him*, (Phil. iii. 20; Heb. ix. 28.) His language is figurative, as it was in the invitations quoted from the gospels; and his allusions refer to the exhibition of the Spirit and the bride, just completed; but the address may be considered an application of the whole revelation to the case of the sinner individually, and to that of all collectively, before whom this portion of Scripture may be placed.

As if it had been said, by way of objection, ‘If the Lamb’s wife (the new Jerusalem) be not the whole multitude (*ἑκκλησία*) of disciples themselves, but only a representation of the *assemblage* of doctrinal *principles* involved in the divine purpose of grace, what interest have we (disciples) in that which is set forth as identic with the Lamb?’

In anticipation of this objection, we may suppose it to be now said by the Saviour, ‘Behold, the plan of salvation is here set before you, under the figure of the splendid city you have been just contemplating; all its provisions and advantages being equivalent to, and comprehended in, what is represented by the river of the water of life:—to trust in the refuge represented by the city, is to take of the water of life. The exhibition of divine mercy is, itself, an invitation to accept of it; and this invitation is accompanied with the assurance, that what is sought for is *freely* given. Come, for all things are ready. Behold, I create all things new; and in this new creation, otherwise represented as the new Jerusalem, consists the preparation for your eternal salvation.’

Surely, it is not for the sinner to say, Because I do not myself constitute an element of this new creation, this city—the bride—I have no interest in it! On the contrary, the language of common prudence must be, ‘If such be the preparation, such the arrangement of sovereign grace, shall I reject or lightly esteem it? If the atonement of Jesus offered in my behalf be here represented as the *aliment* of eternal life; if his righteousness be the wall of salvation; if the riches of his merits be the ransom of the soul; if, in him I have an access unto God; if such be the purpose of infinite wisdom and mercy, how can I do despite to this *spirit of grace*? How can I trample under foot such means of reconciliation, or count the provisions of such a covenant an unholy thing?’

Such, we think, are the considerations suggested by a just application of these *invitations* to the whole subject of the Apocalypse ; according as they do with the earnest entreaty of the apostle, (2 Cor. vi. 1, 2 :) “ We then beseech you that ye receive not the grace of God in vain ; for He saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee ; behold, now is the accepted time ; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

Vs. 18, 19. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book : and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book [tree] of life, and out of the holy city, and (from) the things which are written in this book.

Μαρτυρῶ ἐγὼ παντὶ τῷ ἀκούοντι τοὺς λόγους τῆς προφητείας τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου· ἐάν τις ἐπιθήῃ ἐπ’ αὐτιά, ἐπιθήσει ὁ θεὸς ἐπ’ αὐτὸν τὰς πληγὰς τὰς γεγραμμένας ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ· καὶ ἐάν τις ἀφέλῃ ἀπὸ τῶν λόγων τοῦ βιβλίου τῆς προφητείας ταύτης, ἀφελεῖ ὁ θεὸς τὸ μέρος αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς καὶ ἐκ τῆς πόλεως τῆς ἁγίας, τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ τούτῳ.

§ 543. ‘ For I testify,’ &c.—There is some difference here in the Greek editions, some of them omitting the word γάρ, (for,) and employing the simple verb μαρτυρῶ, (I testify,) and others, reading Συμμαρτυροῦμαι γὰρ παντὶ ἀκούοντι, which may be rendered, For I testify, *together with him that heareth*. This testimony, according to the last reading, would seem to be given in connection with the invitation to come and take of the water of life *freely* ; as if it were added, for nothing militating with this *free* participation of the water of life shall be admissible in the construction of this revelation.

The other, however, is said to be the better reading, (Rob. Lex.) *I witness to the hearing*. In either case *the hearing* is the hearer just before instructed *to say*, Come ; these *hearers*, as we suppose, being put for teachers or doctrines, virtually urging the invitations of the gospel upon all who need the salvation. The word *man* is supplied by our translators ; the terms *any* and *every* would apply to angels as well as to men, and to doctrines (λόγοι) as well as to human beings. The substance of the testimony, however, is the same, viz. that nothing is *to be added to*, or *taken from*, the words of this prophecy or interpretation of the divine will, (§ 69.)

This notice was intended primarily, no doubt, to protect the integrity of the *text* ; which seems to have been preserved by it undisputed, with very trifling exceptions, in a remarkable manner.\* the ultimate object, we think,

\* Even the misconstruction of these verses may have been the means of preventing many alterations, interpolations, and excisions, which a pious officiousness would have otherwise undertaken ; if only from a well-meaning effort to make that plain which was certainly obscure. So the misapplication of the book to temporal objects secured for the first manuscripts an early attention, a critical examination, frequent collation, and a jealous watchfulness, the advantages of which might not have been otherwise enjoyed.



was to protect the *construction*, as above suggested ; that no principle or expression should be accounted admissible which might take from the *freeness* of the salvation offered, or add a condition or burden inconsistent with the invitation to take of the water of life *gratis*. The nature of the threatened penalties must be sufficient to show, that doctrines or principles are contemplated as obnoxious to them, and not human beings. "If any man (any one) shall add to (put upon, ἐπιθή) these things, God shall add to him (ἐπιθήσει ἐπ' αὐτόν, put upon him or it) the plagues written in this book." The plagues or blows (πληγὰς) written in this book, are the seven plagues of the seven vials—the grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, the bloody sea, the fountains and rivers of blood, the scorching of the sun, the torment peculiar to the kingdom of the beast, the drying up of the Euphrates, the irruption of the spirits unclean as frogs, the earthquake and the hail, and the dissolution of the great city : add to these the plague of the scorpion locusts and the scorpion tails of the Euphratean horses, the plagues which the two witnesses were empowered to inflict, the plagues to which Babylon was subjected, and the plague inflicted upon the head of the beast. These are all "the plagues written in this book." We have examined them severally, and, however defective our definitions may have been, it is evident that these plagues or blows are of a figurative character ; symbolizing different tests by which the fallacy of erroneous systems and doctrinal principles is to be exposed. Corresponding with this construction, we presume the admonition or caution contained in the verses upon which we are now commenting to be equivalent to the declaration, that all false doctrines or principles introduced into this revelation, or brought to bear upon it, will be subjected to the tests just enumerated ; their fallacy and inconsistency being exhibited by the same process.

§ 544. 'And if any man [any one] shall take away,' &c., 'God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and (from) the things which are written in this book ;' or, as we might render the Greek of some editions, If any one take away from the sayings of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away the part of him (or of it) from the *tree* of life, and out of the holy city, (and) of the (things) written in this book ; or, from the *tree* of life, and out of the holy city, *written in this book*. According to the first reading, the things written, &c. constitute a third figure ; according to the last reading, the words, "written in this book," being in the genitive plural in the original, apply to the *tree* and the *city*, also in the genitive, and together requiring the participle agreeing with them in the genitive plural. We are inclined to prefer this reading, because it accords with the construction of the preceding verse. The *plagues* are designated as those written in the book ; and, corresponding with this, the *tree*, or book of life, and the *city*, are also designated as those "written in this book." The difference, as we understand the figures, is not very

material. The tree of life, and the book of life, and the holy city, we suppose to represent the same divine purpose—different illustrations of the same word of God, the divine plan of redemption, which also constitutes the things written in this book of Revelation. They are all equivalents, although affording a variety in their mode of exhibiting the same truths. To take the part of a doctrine or principle out of, or away from, either or all of these illustrations or exhibitions, is to show that it has no share in them. So any doctrine or principle taking away from the substance or from the purport of this revelation any portion of its truths, will be shown to have no part in a true exhibition of the divine plan of mercy.

This book (the Apocalypse) we assumed, in the first instance, and we think it will so appear to be, an unveiling or revelation, in a spiritual sense, of Jesus Christ himself, especially as the word of God, the purpose of sovereign grace, or divine plan of mercy. Any doctrine, principle, or construction, tending to engraft upon this revelation matters entirely of a different character, civil, political, or ecclesiastical, or tending to represent this divine purpose as a plan of salvation partly of works and partly of grace, or entirely of works instead of grace, is a doctrine or construction *adding to* or *laying upon* this book things which do not belong to it; consequently, such doctrine or construction must be eventually exposed to certain tests of truth, illustrated by the plagues written in this book. As, for example, the plague to which the harlot was finally exposed was that of being destroyed by the *ten horns*; the action of the law showing the utter destitution of the harlot-system of any righteousness or means of justification. The plague by which Babylon was finally destroyed was *fire*—the fire which is to try every work—the test of the written word by which every doctrine or construction is to be tried; the false doctrine or interpretation being destroyed, although the *teacher* himself may be a subject of mercy—saved indeed through that very plan of sovereign grace which, through ignorance, he may have been the instrument of misrepresenting.

The taking away that which belongs to this book, we suppose to be something of the same character. In effect, the two figures are nearly convertible. To apply any portion of the things written in this book to a wrong object, is to take them away from their true object, and consequently to diminish the number of principles or elements of truth applicable to the true design of the revelation. As the two errors are thus interchangeable, so the figures representing the penalty are interchangeable. The effect of subjection to the *tests* or plagues being that of depriving the false principle tried of *its part*, or rather of any part, in the true exhibition of God's purpose of redemption.

THE PAROUSIA, OR SECOND COMING.

V. 20. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly :  
 Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

λέγει ὁ μαρτυρῶν ταῦτα· καὶ ἔρχομαι  
 ταχύ.  
 Ἀμήν, ἔρχου, κύριε Ἰησοῦ.

§ 545. 'He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly.'—These words are still the language of Jesus, who is the testifier or *witness* referred to, as we learn from the preceding verses, (vs. 16 and 18.) It is Jesus who testifies as to the consequences of any alterations in the words of the book, and it is consequently he who now announces his coming with a species of asseveration. Of this same Jesus, "the faithful witness," it was said, at the commencement of the book, (Rev. i. 7,) Behold, he cometh with clouds; which coming with clouds we supposed to consist in a revelation of himself through the medium of the types, and shadows, and symbolic language of the sacred Scriptures, (§ 18,) and particularly in the figurative exhibition of this Apocalypse.

In the address to the angel of the church of Ephesus it is said by the same speaker, "Repent, and do thy first works, or *else I will come* unto thee quickly;" an intimation that the purpose of this coming, whenever it takes place, is to correct erroneous views in matters of faith, (§ 44;) so it is said to the angel of Pergamos: "Repent, or *else I will come*," &c. (Rev. ii. 16.) A like caution is given to the angel of the church of Philadelphia, (Rev. iii. 11:) "Behold, I come quickly; hold fast," &c. As it had been before said, "*If thou shalt not watch*, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee," (Rev. iii. 3;) while, to the church of Laodicea, after a very severe rebuke, it is said, "*If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him*," &c. In these cases the coming is spoken of hypothetically, as depending upon a certain contingency—something to take place if the occasion called for it—the existence, for example, of certain erroneous views of doctrine requiring a perfect manifestation of truth for their correction. The angels or churches are not supposed to know the event: at the same time, the speaker knew that the occasion would call for his coming, and therefore it was previously said by the Spirit, (aside from these addresses,) "Behold, he cometh." It was foreseen that the contemplated contingency would take place. The errors prevailing would call for the counteracting manifestation; accordingly,



except in these addresses, the coming is spoken of as an event positively to take place. The kind of coming contemplated we suppose to be the same in both cases.

At the close of the sixth chapter certain elements are represented as unable to abide the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, or to endure the wrath of the Lamb, the day of that wrath being come, (§ 170.) The coming of this day we take to be equivalent to the coming of the Lord; these elements fleeing from the face of Divine Sovereignty for the same reason that the old heaven and the old earth fled away from the face of him who sat upon the *great white throne*. The wrath of the Lamb here spoken of we presume to be of the same kind as that with which the holders of Nicolaitane doctrines were threatened, (Rev. ii. 16 :) “Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against *them* with the sword of my *mouth* ;”—this sword of the *mouth* being also the same as that with which the rider of the white horse was armed, (Rev. xix. 15,) and with which the forces of the beast and false prophet were slain; a weapon employed in the destruction of error, and not in the destruction of human beings. The same wrath and, of course, the same coming, we conceive to be alluded to, (Rev. xi. 18,) immediately upon the sounding of the last trumpet: “The nations were angry, and *thy wrath is come*, and the time of the dead,” &c.—a *coming* involved in the coming of the *hour of the judgment of God*, (Rev. xiv. 7,) which hour is likewise the time of harvest, (Rev. xiv. 15;) these being not successive events, but different figures of one event. The same may be said of the “great day of God Almighty,” the day of the battle of Armageddon, (§ 369,) the coming of which is spoken of as like unto that of a thief, (Rev. xvi. 14, 15;) corresponding with the coming threatened the angel of the church of Sardis. We have given our reasons for supposing the battle of Armageddon to be coincident with the destruction of Babylon, (§ 442;) so we suppose the hour of the judgment of the great city, (Rev. xviii. 10,) to correspond with the day of wrath, (Rev. vi. 17.) And as the manifestation of truth must be equivalent to the destruction of falsehood, so the coming of the marriage feast of the Lamb (Rev. xix. 7) must be coincident with the coming of the judgment of Babylon, of the battle of Armageddon, and of the day of wrath. From all these passages we conclude that the *coming* in question consists in a revelation of truth in its proper spiritual sense.

§ 546. Immediately after the exhibition of the New Jerusalem, it was said, (Rev. xxii. 7,) ‘Behold, I come quickly;’ corresponding with the declaration uttered immediately after the account given of the gathering of the kings of the earth for the battle of the great day; with this difference, that the coming *quickly* is a coming to all—the coming *as a thief*, is a coming to those unprepared. The coming of Jesus, quickly or suddenly, will

happen even to those *who look for him* ; but his coming *as a thief*, must be to those who do not look for him. The coming *quickly*, is that which the follower of the Lamb cheerfully greets ; the coming as a thief, is that which the adversary cannot abide. To the beast and his forces upon the field of Armageddon, the Word comes as a thief ; to those keeping the sayings of the book, the same Word comes suddenly, but neither sooner nor more suddenly than desired. As the *coming with the reward* (Rev. xxii. 14) or hire of an employer, is desired by those about to receive the reward, so the announcement of the approaching development of truth is one cordially responded to by him who *hears* it.

The last declaration of this coming—that which we are now considering—differs from the preceding by the substitution of the word *raí*, *surely* or *verily*, for *ἰδοὺ*, behold—as if the speaker, after having repeatedly said, Behold, I am coming suddenly, now declared himself to have actually come—verily, *I am come* suddenly, or verily, *I do come*. The verb is in the present tense, although a future signification is sometimes implied in the use of it. When the circumstances require it, the expression may be said to look to something *to come* ; but otherwise we may take it in the ordinary acceptance of the present tense. As we find it used, Luke xiii. 7, *ἰδοὺ, τώρα ἐγὼ ἐρχομαι ζητῶν καρπόν*, Behold, (these) three years I come seeking fruit ; so here it is not said, verily, *I will* come suddenly, but, verily, *I do come*, or *I am come*. Such a coming we may suppose to result from the developments of this book properly understood.

The Spirit *and* the bride say, Come : it is not merely the vision of peace, (the new Jerusalem,) or the letter of that *vision* alone which unveils the Saviour, but it is this vision with the *spiritual understanding*—the letter accompanied with the spirit, and so received by him who *hears*. To understand this book in its proper spiritual sense, is to witness the coming of Jesus. Corresponding with this, the Greek term constituting the title of the book, *Apokalypsis*, (Revelation,) is rendered in our common version (1 Cor. i. 7) by the word *coming* ;\*—Paul speaking of those whom he addressed as waiting for the coming (apocalypse) of the Lord. The same Greek term, *apokalypsis*, rendered *revealed*,† (com. ver.) is applied to what is usually considered the second coming of Christ, (2 Thess. i. 7 ;) where those who are troubled are assured of *rest* in the *apocalypse* (revelation) of the Lord from heaven with his mighty angels. The same term expresses enlightening, Luke ii. 32, “ a light to lighten the Gentiles ;” and is rendered, Rom. viii. 19, *manifestation*—the earnest expectation of the creature waiting

\* Wiclif, *scherwynge* ; Tyndale, Cranmer, and Geneva, *apperynge*, (appearing ;) Rheims, *revelation*.

† Wiclif, *scherwynge* ; Tyndale, Cranmer, and Geneva, “ when the Lord Jesus shall *shew himself* from heaven.”

the manifestation of the sons of God. The same Greek term, as a verb, *apocalyppto*, is applied (2 Thess. ii. 3, 8) to the coming (revelation) of the man of sin; the revelation of "that wicked," and the revelation of the Lord Jesus with his holy angels being coincident, the last destroying the first "with the brightness of his coming"—the manifestation of truth, in its own nature, detecting, exposing, and consequently destroying error. The same verb is applied (1 Peter i. 5) to the revelation in the *last* time, of the way of salvation; and immediately afterwards, in the seventh verse, the noun *apocalypsis* is rendered by the word *appearing*; and, in the thirteenth verse, by the word *revelation*, (Tyndale and Cranmer, *declaring*,) both applicable to the final manifestation of Christ. From these examples we seem to be warranted in the conclusion that, in the scriptural sense, the revelation, or showing, or apocalypse of Christ, and the coming, or appearing of Christ, are equivalent and interchangeable terms: when and where Christ is fully revealed or unveiled, then and there *he is come*.

§ 547. In sixteen other passages of the New Testament the term *coming*, as applied to the second advent of our Lord, is expressed in the original by the word *παρουσία*, (*parousia*,) a word signifying actual presence, or being present, (not the act or motion of coming,) from the verb *παίρειμι*, compound of *παρά* and *εἰμί*, *to be present*, to be by the side of one: Lat. *adsum*. From signifying actual presence, the word seems to be taken in Scripture for the appearance of that presence, the one implying the other; as the opponents of Paul said of him, (2 Cor. x. 10.) "His letters are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence (the *parousia* of his body, his personal appearance) is weak, and his speech (*λόγος*, discourse, doctrine, reasoning) contemptible.

Jesus gave his apostles the assurance of his being with them in effect at all times, (Matt. xxviii. 20;) but this was not the *parousia*, or manifestation of his presence alluded to Matt. xxiv. 3, 27, 37, 39, which is evidently identic with the coming, or rather the *being come*, in the clouds, (*ἐρχόμενον ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν*,) spoken of in the thirtieth verse of the same chapter. Paul declares himself to have been present with the Corinthians in spirit, (1 Cor. v. 3;) but this was not the manifestation of his presence, or *parousia*, which some of them considered so insignificant. The term *parousia* is also employed (2 Thess. ii. 1-8) to express the coming spoken of as a revelation in the preceding chapter—a revelation the counterpart or opposite of that of the man of sin. So the *coming* of *that wicked* is distinguished by the same appellation, (*parousia*,) in immediate connection with what is said of the *parousia* or coming of the Lord. These peculiarities warrant, we think, the further conclusion that the terms *parousia* and *apocalypsis* are equivalents: both, as used on these occasions, signifying an intellectual appearance or presence: a manifestation to the understanding, bearing a strict analogy with the exhibition of a corporeal or personal presence, or of



a *being come*. Where and when Jesus Christ is unveiled or revealed, there and then he is present ; his coming has taken place, in the scriptural sense of the expression. The coming of Jesus Christ and the coming of the man of sin are to be understood in the same sense ; the revelation of the first being the means of destroying the last, and one being no more a personal or corporeal appearance than the other.

§ 548. As the revelation (apocalypse) of Jesus Christ and his coming (parousia) appear to be nearly interchangeable expressions, so we think the coming of the *kingdom of God* and the coming of the Lord are equivalents, in the same Scripture sense of the terms.

To the inquiry of the Pharisees, *When does the kingdom of God come ?* Jesus replied, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation ; neither shall they say, Lo here ! or Lo there ! for behold, the kingdom of God is *within you* : and immediately upon giving this answer, he described to his disciples what he terms the day of the Son of man ; the state of things “ in the day when the Son of man is revealed,” (unveiled, ἀποκαλύπεται, Luke xvii. 20–24.) So, after a vivid description of the circumstances of his own advent, in which he says, (Luke xxi. 27,) “ And then shall they see the Son of man coming (ἐρχόμενον) in a cloud with power and great glory,” he adds in reference to this description, (v. 31,) “ So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that *the kingdom of God is nigh at hand*.” In the account given of the transfiguration on the mount by three evangelists, there is the same interchangeable use of these terms to be noticed : “ Verily, I say unto you, (Matt. xvi. 28,) there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death till they see the *Son of man coming in his kingdom* ;” Mark ix. 1, “ Verily, I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here which shall not taste of death, till they have seen *the kingdom of God come with power* ;” Luke ix. 27, “ But I tell you of a truth, (verily,) there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they *see the kingdom of God*.” The circumstances attending this declaration corresponds so precisely in the three accounts, that we cannot hesitate to believe that they all refer to that same prediction ; and we can only account for the difference between the expression employed by Matthew and that given by Mark and Luke, as the words of Jesus, by taking it for granted that these evangelists considered the coming of *Christ* and the coming of the *kingdom of God*, or *seeing the kingdom* itself, as equivalents. In the Scripture sense, to see one is to see the other. We conclude, accordingly, that what is affirmed of the one may be equally affirmed of the other ; and further, that, as the coming of the kingdom of God is identic with the coming of the Lord, so either of these must be identic with the apocalypse, revelation, or unveiling of Jesus, which we have shown to be identic with his *parousia*, or coming ; as any two objects equal to a third object, must be

equal to each other. It is barely necessary to add that the term *kingdom of heaven*, which is peculiar to the gospel of Matthew, must be an equivalent of that of the kingdom of God.

It was said by Jesus to a certain scribe who had justly defined the whole spirit and bearing of the law, (Mark xii. 32–34,) “Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.” The law being a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ; to understand the full force of the requisitions of the law, is something very near to understanding God’s plan of redemption, or the things of his kingdom, the economy by which he reigns. To see the kingdom of God is to possess a right understanding of the divine plan of government, and this understanding can only be possessed by a just appreciation of the condemning power of the law on the one hand, and of the redeeming power revealed by the gospel on the other. A sight of the kingdom of God is thus a matter for the exercise of the understanding: nothing involving objects presented to the physical organs of vision, or not a thing to be seen in the ordinary sense of the term; and, for the reasons just now given, we say the same of the “coming” (*parousia*) and “revelation” (*apocalypse*) of Christ: they are alike the objects of intellectual contemplation, something to be seen by the mind, and to be seen by a *spiritual understanding* of the language of divine revelation.

§ 549. Six days after the declaration of Jesus to his disciples, (just now referred to,) that there were some of them which should not taste of death till they had seen the Son of man coming in his kingdom, or till they had seen the coming of the kingdom of God, he took Peter and James and John into a high mountain apart, where he was transfigured before them. His face shone as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light; and Moses and Elias were seen talking with him. Peter, apparently supposing the three personages whom he beheld to be of equal dignity, proposed the building of three tabernacles, one for each of them, when a bright cloud overshadowed his master, and a voice from heaven pointed him out as the peculiar object of consideration;—as if it had said, Not Moses or Elias, but Jesus, the anointed Saviour: “This is my beloved Son.” To this manifestation of the divine character of his Lord, Peter appeals as an evidence that they who were with him on the mount, and beheld the honour and glory bestowed upon him, were not the subjects of delusion, in making known his “power and coming;” for they had been “eye-witnesses of his majesty,” (2 Pet. iii. 16, 17.) They had seen in anticipation the coming of the Lord in his glory. Here, too, was the fulfilment of his prediction, concerning those who should be thus favoured before they tasted death; corresponding with this intellectually, we say, To see Jesus manifested as the *beloved Son* of God, (§ 525,) as the Sun of righteousness, as clothed in the garment of divine perfection; to perceive the writings of Moses, and the predictions



of the prophets, co-operating in exhibiting his glorious character, as in communion with him; to see him, in fine, as he is exhibited in the gospel, (the mount, § 369,) spiritually understood, is to see him coming in his kingdom.

Such, we may suppose, to have been the peculiar privilege afforded the writer of this Apocalypse. With Peter and James, he saw the coming of the Lord, as prefigured in the mount; but *in spirit*, as related in this book, he saw that coming in all its details. Here he saw Jesus manifested as *one like unto the Son of man*, as the Lamb, as the Word of God, as the Tabernacle of God, as the Holy City, the Bride, (the divine purpose of mercy, the beloved of God,) and finally, as the Sovereign on the throne, occupying the seat of the Deity, and identified with the Supreme Being—God in Christ—the Word, the *dictum* of sovereign grace—overcoming all things, in a spiritual sense, by the power of his righteousness, as he created all things by the word of his power. Thus, to John, this *apocalypsis* or revelation was, at the same time, the *parousia* or coming of Christ, and an exhibition of the kingdom of God with power. The apostle may not have been favoured with a *concurrent* spiritual understanding of what he saw in vision; this understanding may have been subsequently afforded him. As Jesus opened the minds of two of his disciples in their walk to Emmaus, that they might understand the Scriptures, with the letter of which they were already acquainted; so he may have opened the understanding of his beloved disciple, during his confinement in Patmos, to perceive the spiritual purport of what had been already symbolically represented to him. This subsequent illumination of the mind may be implied in the declaration, *Verily, I come quickly*; the coming consisting especially in a development of the spiritual meaning of the things just exhibited.\*

§ 550. ‘Amen. (Even so,) come, Lord Jesus.’—According to the pointing of some editions, the word *Amen* would seem to be part of the annunciation of Him, who says, *I come quickly*; but according to the Greek edition we copy, which seems to be most correct in this particular, this *amen* is part of the *response* of the apostle. The words *even so*, are a translation of the word *ναί*, found in some editions of the Greek immediately after *ἀμήν*, (amen,) and is the same word which in the preceding clause was

\* Under this construction, it must be evident that the moment of death is, to every individual of the human species, the *coming of the Lord*—the transition from a state of imperfect understanding, and even of ignorance, to a state of perfect knowledge of the truth; “For now,” as it is said, (1 Cor. xiii. 12,) “we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face.” Such we believe to be the common, although undefined, impression of Christians generally. The moment of death, like the day of the Lord, comes to every one quickly or suddenly: and to those unprepared, as a thief in the night. So it is only in an entire reliance upon the merits of his Saviour that the disciple can welcome death in the language of the apostle: *Even so, come, Lord Jesus.*



rendered *surely*. Consistently, it should have been again so rendered ; and the word *amen*, signifying *so let it be*, or, so be it : the whole expression is that of perfect concurrence. He that testifieth these things, saith, “ Verily, I come quickly ;” to which the apostle responds in vision, apparently, “ So let it be, verily come, Lord Jesus ;” a response according with the instruction given to him that heareth, in the seventeenth verse. The Spirit and the bride saith, Come ; whereupon, he that testifieth these things, saith, Surely, I do come, or, I come ; perhaps in the sense of, I am coming, quickly or suddenly : to which the *hearing* apostle responds, So let it be, surely, come, Lord Jesus ; that is, come as thou hast said, quickly, suddenly.

This is the apostle, of whom it was said by Jesus, “ If I will that he tarry till *I come*, what is that to thee ? Follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die : yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die ; but, If I will that he tarry till *I come*, what is that to thee ?” (John xxi. 22, 23.) Now let us suppose the coming of Jesus to consist in that *unveiling* of himself, which results from a spiritual understanding of this book of Revelation, and we have only to suppose that such an understanding was afforded to the apostle, to perceive that he did *tarry* till he saw in effect, even in this life, the second coming of his Master.

Whatever that *coming* may be, however, the apostle, in vision, declares himself prepared for it : his loins girt about with truth, his garments of salvation gathered about him, arrayed in the robe of his Saviour’s righteousness, washed and cleansed and sanctified in the atoning sacrifice of his great High-Priest, he is found *watching*—waiting, even in a state of eager anticipation. In this position, he appears to speak, not only for himself, but for all who, like him, are trusting in the merits of the same Redeemer, “ Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.” To such, the day of the Lord may come suddenly, but it will not come as a *thief in the night* ; because they are always prepared—with them it is always day. Their position in Jehovah’s righteousness, is a position of *light* ; they are not exposed to the dangers of darkness ; their lamps are always trimmed and burning : or what is equivalent to it, Christ is their lamp, as the Lamb is the lamp of the holy city, and they walk in the light of the glory of his perfection. Having on the breastplate of divine righteousness, shod with the preparation of the glad tidings of reconciliation with their God ; their faith serving them as a shield, and the hope of salvation as a helmet ; the sword of the *Spirit* enabling them to combat with the deadly tendency of the *letter* ; they are always on guard, ready for the presence (*parousia*) of the Captain of their salvation ; with the assurance that, when he shall appear, they shall be like him : for as they have once borne the image of the earthy, so adopted in him they will then bear the image of the heavenly—being now new creatures in Christ.

Hence, the argument of Paul with the Thessalonian disciples: We are not of the night, nor of darkness, therefore let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Being thus children of the day, thus clothed with the *imputed righteousness* of Christ, it became them to walk consistently for his sake who died for them, that *his* name might be glorified; thus judging, as he elsewhere expresses it, that He who died for all, died that those which live, might live not to themselves, but to Him who died for them.

V. 21. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (be) with you all. Amen. Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἀγίων.

§ 551. ‘The grace,’ &c.—We do not suppose this verse to form a part of the narrative of the vision, or to be uttered in vision. That narrative is now closed; the apostle has gone through with the account of all that he saw and heard; and he now transmits this account to those for whose edification it was intended, without any comment of his own, other than this apostolic benediction, as it is usually termed.

The word *be* is supplied in our common version, no verb being expressed in the original. If we suppose *is* to be understood instead of *be*, the reading will be equivalent to a declaration, that the *grace* referred to, Rev. i. 4, has now been fully exhibited. As if it had been said, in reference to the completion of this unveiling of the Lord our righteousness, Behold, the *grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ is with you; or, is now set before you. This *grace* we suppose to be the same as that referred to, Acts xv. 11, as the means of salvation for Jew and Gentile; the same that is spoken of, 2 Cor. viii. 9: “For ye know the *grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich;” this *grace* of Christ consisting in the substitution of himself in behalf of the sinner; an act entirely of free, unmerited favour, and for that reason strictly entitled to the appellation of *grace*.

This *grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ constitutes, we apprehend, the *gift by grace*, spoken of and enlarged upon, Rom. v. 15–21: “For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the *grace* of God, and the *gift by grace*, by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as by one that sinned, the *gift*; for the judgment was by one to condemnation; but the *free gift* is of many offences unto justification. For if by one’s man’s offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of *grace*, and of the *gift of righteousness*, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore, as by the offence of one (judgment came) upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the [imputed] righteousness of

one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For, as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover, the law entered that the offence might abound: but where sin abounded *grace* did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might *grace* reign (predominate) through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." Such is the arrangement (*διαθήκη*) of grace, and this we suppose to be *the* grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, here referred to; either as that which has been set before those to whom the Apocalypse is addressed, or as that grace in which the apostle prays that they may all participate.

Some of the Greek editions read *with all*, others *with you all*, and some, as that from which we copy, *with all the saints* or *holy ones*. If this last be correct, the language of this verse not being the language of vision, we suppose these holy ones to be disciples, so termed on account of their position by adoption in Christ; whereas, the *holy* ones of the vision we have taken to be *principles* of the economy of grace personified. The term *holy*, however, has in both cases the same meaning; it is a term of *position*, not of innate quality. Adopted in Christ, the disciple is *accounted* holy, or set apart; as the vessels of the temple were holy, not by any peculiarity of their composition, but by the use to which they were appropriated. This distinction cannot be too much insisted upon, as the disciple can no more depend upon a *quality* in himself called *holiness*, or upon a holiness of his own, than he can upon a righteousness of his own; and it is especially to set forth these truths and their opposite errors, that Jesus Christ here reveals himself; while it is these errors of an *adulterated faith* that militate most with a just exhibition of *sovereign grace*.

#### S U M M A R Y .

§ 552. In reading any book of importance, our first inquiry is to know what the author purposes to show. When we have finished the perusal of the work, we very properly look back to ascertain whether the end proposed has been accomplished. We think the portion of the inspired writings recently the subject of our inquiries, under a spiritual construction, fully equal to abide the test of such an examination.

The work is entitled, by its divine Author, the *unveiling* (*apocalypsis*) of *Jesus Christ*: that is, as we have considered it, the revelation of his character, offices, and doctrine—the unveiling of the anointed Saviour, (§ 2.) This is the purport or design of the whole book.

The source whence this revelation is derived having been stated by the apostle in the commencement of the first chapter, it is said, in allusion to



that source, (Jesus,) "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him," &c. ; leaving the inference to be fairly drawn, that the *coming* spoken of consists in the *unveiling* now about to be made ; that it is in the symbolical revelation here made that Jesus is to be seen coming as in the clouds, (§ 17.) It is on account, too, of this revelation, apparently, that certain legal elements and principles of self-righteousness are represented as mourning or wailing—tribes of the earth, opposites of the sealed ones represented by the one hundred and forty-four thousand of the twelve chosen tribes. This, then, is the general proposition of the work :—that the *unveiling* of Jesus Christ about to be made is something equivalent or analogous to his coming in the clouds ; and that its nature or tendency is such as to cause, figuratively speaking, the mourning or lamentation of all elements of doctrine opposed to the truth of salvation as it is revealed in him.

The vision commences with what John saw in spirit, witnessing the day of the Lord, (§ 24,) or its equivalent. Here Jesus is first seen as one like unto the Son of man. To the apostle who had been literally the bosom companion of the Son of man, this appearance was sufficient to identify the form he saw with that of his beloved Master. He had been his companion while on earth, he had seen him on the cross, he had seen him in the grave, he had seen him risen from the dead, and he now saw him clothed with a perfect and complete righteousness of his own—girt about with truth, the Ancient of days, the possessor of the sword of the Spirit, and of the keys of the mystery of death and hell, and the supreme overseer of the churches.

In the introductory addresses dictated to the apostle, the reason is given for the revelation about to be made. Certain errors exist, calling for a peculiar manifestation of truth—a manifestation spoken of by Christ as his *coming quickly* or suddenly. The churches, or their angels, are to be supposed ignorant of the predetermined purpose of the Lord to come, or of his actual coming. This event is therefore spoken of to them as something contingent : "Repent, and do thy first works, *or else* I will come." The speaker, however, knew that they would not repent—that the errors in question would demand the threatened correction ; consequently, with him there is no uncertainty as to the actual taking place of this coming. The form of the announcement, however, serves the purpose of indicating the design of the advent, viz., that of correcting certain errors of doctrine ; and it is important for us to keep this design in view, that we may better understand the revelation about to be made. The erroneous views to be corrected we suppose to be those of a self-righteous character, *tending to create the belief that man (the sinner) is to overcome the requisitions of the law by some works, merits or propitiation of his own.* To correct this misapprehension, the *principle* or *power* really *overcoming*, and upon which alone dependence is to be placed, is set forth as that to which certain very peculiar

promises are made ; in order, perhaps, that we may recognize the principle by understanding the fulfilment of the promises made to it.

Here is another stage in the process of revelation. We are introduced to a new character, *The Overcoming*, (ὁ νικῶν, or, as we have proposed to denominate it, ὁ λόγος ὁ νικῶν,) and we are somewhat at a loss to conceive what part this overcoming principle can take in the unveiling of the anointed Saviour. We are, however, to keep the personification in mind throughout the remainder of the vision, watching its progress, and judging finally of the sense in which the promises made to it may be said to be fulfilled.

§ 553. The fourth chapter affords an exhibition of the attributes of the Deity, such as we may suppose them to appear prior to the revelation of the plan of salvation. The elements of truth peculiar to that plan exist, but they are not yet revealed. The four *living creatures* and the twenty-four *elders* may be considered the depositaries of this secret ; but the mystery itself, in the nature of the case, can be made known only through a certain instrumentality. This mystery (the divine plan of redemption, or perhaps the plan of divine government) is represented (chap. v.) as a sealed book in the right hand of the Most High. The only instrumentality by which it can be unfolded is the propitiatory power peculiar to the plan : the Lamb, as it had been slain, alone is able to open the book. Here we advance another important step in the unveiling of Christ : knowing him to be the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, we recognize him in the power now prevailing, or *overcoming*, to open the book. Having arrived at this point, we are to bear in mind that whatever is revealed or unveiled concerning the Lamb is a revelation of Jesus Christ himself.

The first revelation made by the Lamb, in opening the sealed book, (chap. vi.) is that of a power going forth *overcoming* and *to overcome*, or that he may overcome, (νικῶν καὶ ἵνα νικήσῃ,) and, apparently, in order that he may obtain the reward promised to him that *overcometh*. Thus far, however, the combatant is seen to have received only the *crown* promised *the overcoming* in the epistle to the church of Pergamos ;—the white horse upon which he is mounted, and the bow with which he is armed—the sustaining power of divine righteousness and the overruling power of the covenant of grace, (the promise of mercy, § 147,)—indicating the means by which his final victory is to be obtained.

We seem to lose sight of this Conqueror for a great part of the subsequent narrative, but we leave him in the midst of a victorious career ; his operations are continued, although presented to us under different figures, and he again appears to manifest his triumphant progress at the close of the revelation.

The opening of the three subsequent seals exhibits the existence of three other powers destined to come into collision with the rider of the *white* horse.



The fiery-red colour of the horse of him to whom the great sword is given, corresponds with the colour of the great red dragon, the antagonist of Michael. The mercenary character of the rider of the black horse calls to mind the commercial spirit of Babylon; and Death and Hell (sustained by the *green* horse) are expressly mentioned as terminating their career on the exhibition of the great white throne. We may presume, therefore, all three of these combatants to be understood as operating throughout the vision, till overcome by the rider of the white horse: indeed, their functions may not differ from those of the three spirits, unclean as frogs, (§ 365,) out of the mouths of the dragon, of the beast, and of the false prophet, engaged in summoning the kings of the earth to the great battle of Armageddon.

The opening of the fifth seal shows the state of suspense in which certain elements of truth are held pending the contest finally to result in the manifestation of their correctness.

The opening of the sixth seal reveals the consternation figuratively incident to all principles of error, or of self-righteous doctrine, in consequence of the unfolding of this great mystery of salvation: at the same time it exhibits (chap. vii.) the opposite figurative rejoicing of the principles of truth in anticipation of the same development; while it shows (by what is related of the four angels holding the four winds of the earth) the true cause of the prevalence of error in the earthly system, viz., a privation of the spiritual sense of the written word.

The opening of these six seals affords a general view of the position of things—a glance at the whole field of action, the different elements in operation, their beginning or going forth, and their end; for we suppose the close of the sixth and the close of the seventh chapters to present scenes parallel, as to the progress of the narrative, with the state of things depicted at the conclusion of the twentieth and in the former part of the twenty-first chapters.

§ 554. The opening of the seventh seal (chap. viii.) affords a new series of representations; not the exhibition of new things, but further particulars of what has been already revealed in substance.

The day of the wrath of the Lamb has been already spoken of as come; we are now to learn in what the exhibition of this wrath consists: this knowledge comes to us as the results of the voices or sounds (revelations) of seven trumpets. Various self-righteous and self-justifying principles, figuratively spoken of as material objects, are represented as exposed to certain tests showing their true character. The trees and grass of the earth are burned up; pretensions to human merit wither for want of root; the sea becomes blood, and human means of preservation from the vindictive wrath represented by the sea (ships) are proved to be worthless. Fountains and rivers (human means of atonement) become bitter, incapable alike of promoting purification or of preserving life: the sun, moon, and stars of



this first heaven are darkened ; no sources of righteousness are now exhibited : the bottomless pit system (chap. ix.) is seen to send forth no principles but such as are calculated to torment, (*torture*,) as with a scorpion's sting, all pretensions of merit coming in contact with them. The Euphratean system of atonement (the *great river* in human apprehension) is seen to be even of a more deadly character, its principles resulting in the condemnation of those trusting to it as a means of eternal life—the horsemen killing where the scorpion-locusts only hurt or *tortured*.

The six first trumpets thus exhibit, in a summary manner, the downfall of the system of error ; each of them representing the same process by different figures, or in a different light. The last of the six affords, also, in the narrative of the two witnesses, (chap. xi.,) a kind of historical epitome of the progress of error, from its most triumphant *stage* to its destruction : from the possession of the outer court of the temple and of the holy city by the Gentiles, and the destroying of these witnesses by the beast from the pit, to their final glorification, and the shock given to the false system represented by the *great city*, as by an earthquake. As a result of the revelation of the sixth trumpet we learn, also, as a rule of interpretation, from the mighty angel, (chap. x.,) that *time* is not to be taken into consideration ; and, comparing the measures of time mentioned in the eleventh chapter with those afterwards met with, we perceive this rule of *time no longer* to be applied to the events of the sixth trumpet, as well as to those subsequently related. From the same mighty angel we receive the intimation of the twofold sense of the language of revelation, illustrated by the *sweet* and *bitter* taste of the little book.

§ 555. We now come to the voice of the seventh or *last* trumpet, the sounding of which gives occasion to a choral action of praise and thanksgiving of peculiar solemnity : it constitutes, also, the last of the *three woes* denounced upon the inhabitants of the earth, and seems to be the revelation designed to be most peculiarly instrumental in the destruction of error and in the final manifestation of truth. Still this trumpet is not to be taken as announcing occurrences *subsequent* to those already detailed : on the contrary, it goes back even to a revelation of the divine counsels prior to the events already unfolded ; its purport may therefore be considered an amplification and more extended view, or more detailed exhibition, of the subjects revealed in the preceding chapters.

The war in heaven, (chap. xii.,) with which the revelation of this trumpet commences, teaches us the difficulty existing in the nature of things in reconciling the principles of divine justice with those of mercy,—the difficulty in overcoming the power of the legal adversary (the dragon) by that of the intercessor, (Michael.) The propitiatory principle, (the blood of the Lamb,) however, secures the ascendancy to the latter, and the accusing spirit; ejected from the heavenly view of the divine plan of govern-

ment, is to be found only in the earthly exhibition of that government. Even here the power of the *adversary* is manifested to predominate only so long as the true exhibition of the economy of grace is lost sight of. So long as the witnesses are prophesying in sackcloth, and the woman which bore the man-child is secluded in the wilderness, so long the dragon is enabled to make war with the remnant of her seed. But the dragon does not carry on this war in his own person; he does not appear on earth in his proper character; he gives his power to a certain blasphemous principle represented (chap. xiii.) as a beast originating from the sea or abyss; and this beast exercises his influence through the instrumentality of a certain other principle, denominated the *false prophet*. The secret is here unfolded, that the legal adversary (Satan) is actually to be found in the blasphemous principle to which we have given the appellation of self, and that the power of this *self*, and consequently of the adversary, is sustained by a misconstruction or false interpretation of the language of revelation. We do not suppose the reign of this beast to depict a different error, or a different system of error, from that previously alluded to; it only constitutes a new and more detailed illustration of the course and power of the same errors.

The mind having been turned aside for a short interval, to contemplate the particulars of the beast and false prophet, the narrative is again resumed in the description of the Lamb upon Mount Zion, (chap. xiv;) in the annunciations of the preaching of the gospel, of the fall of Babylon, and of the visitation of wrath upon the worshippers of the beast; with a description of the appearance of the *Son of man* upon a white cloud, of the harvest, and of the vintage: Jesus Christ being revealed upon the *white cloud* in the same character as he appeared amidst the golden candlesticks. Immediately upon this we have the account (chaps. xv. and xvi.) of the pouring out of the vials of wrath; operations, it may be presumed, concurrent if not identic with those of the harvest and vintage—different illustrations of the same exercise of divine power in terminating the reign or influence of error by the exhibition of truth: with this difference, that whereas the preceding revelation consisted more especially in the application of the principle of divine *justice*, as a test of the erroneous doctrines to which it was applied; the effusion of the vials of wrath represents the application of the true principle of divine *worship* (§ 356) as a test in the exhibition of the same or similar errors.

§ 556. The result of the pouring out of the sixth vial of wrath, the preparation for the battle of Armageddon, (Rev. xvi. 14,) indicates the immediate connection between this part of the narration and the account subsequently given (chap. xix.) of the victory obtained by the Rider of the *white horse* over the beast and his forces. The Conqueror going forth at the opening of the first seal, “overcoming, and that he might overcome,” is not indeed so termed here, but the fact sets him forth as *the overcoming*,



(ὁ νικῶν,) and this in a most signal manner. We follow him then after his victory, and we next meet with the representation (chap. xx.) of one that sat upon the great *white throne*. We compare this appearance with the promise made in the Epistle to the angel of the Laodicean church: "To him that *overcometh*, (or, *to the overcoming*,) will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne." We look forward to the declaration of Him who makes all things new, (chap. xxi.,) and we find this great white throne to be the throne of God. We look further, and find (chap. xxii.) God and the Lamb occupying one and the same throne or seat. The promise is then fulfilled: *the overcoming*—the conqueror of the beast and of the false prophet—is manifested to occupy the seat or throne of God and the Lamb.

Again, in the Epistle to the church of Pergamos, we find a white stone promised to *the overcoming*; "and in the stone a new name written, which no one knoweth except he that receiveth it." It is not said of Him that overcame the beast, that he had a white stone given him, but it is said that he had a *name written, that no one knew but himself*. So it is said of *the overcoming* in the Epistle to the church of Philadelphia, "I will write upon him the name of my God;" and of the warrior of Armageddon we find it said, "He hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, **KING OF KINGS, and LORD OF LORDS.**" In the address to the church of Thyatira, it is said, "Unto him that overcometh, I will give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers." Corresponding with this, the Rider of the white horse is described as having a sharp sword proceeding from his mouth, "that with it he should smite the nations, and rule them as with a rod of iron:" and so we find he did smite the kings of the earth and their forces, under the conduct of the beast, with the sword out of his mouth. On this occasion, too, his name is expressly declared to be the *Word of God*;—ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ is, therefore, ὁ λόγος ὁ νικῶν. The Word of God is he that overcometh. Connecting this declaration with the implied definition of the Deity of his own Word, (Jer. xxiii. 29,) we see in the *fire from heaven*, by which the nations, Gog and Magog, were destroyed, (Rev. xx. 9,) a further fulfilment of the same promise; while the *fire* by which the harlot and the city (Babylon) were destroyed (chap. xvii. and xviii.) affords a like exhibition of the power of this *overcoming Word*;—fire and the sword being interchangeable figures of the instrument employed in the destruction of error. We have already supposed the same *Word* to be the occupant of the great white throne, both as suggested by the course of the narrative, and as a fulfilment of the promise to him that overcometh. If we are correct in this particular, the accuser, and death, and hell, must be all *overcome* by the same all-powerful Word.

We find no other champion in the Apocalypse to whom we can apply



this epithet of *the overcoming* in connection with the promises, except the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who *overcame* to open the book ; the Lamb by whose blood the brethren *overcame* the dragon, and by whom the ten kings in alliance with the beast were to be *overcome*, (Rev. xvii. 14 ;) and Jesus, who speaks in the introductory Epistles as having himself overcome, (Rev. iii. 21.) The Lion of the tribe of Judah, and the Lamb, and Jesus, we know to be identic ; and as there cannot be two conquerors, we are shut up to the conclusion, that the Rider of the *white horse* is Jesus, the Son of God ;—the manifestation of this truth being a fulfilment of the promise of the Alpha and Omega, Rev. xxi. 7 : “ He that overcometh shall inherit all things ; and I will be his God, and he shall be my Son.”

The Word of God is thus manifested or revealed to be the Son of God. Certain promises are made to him that conquers. The Rider of the white horse undertakes to conquer ; he does conquer, and he obtains the promised reward. This, we think, must be indisputable ; although some portion of these promises may not be easily explained. The conqueror is identic with Jesus Christ ; all, therefore, that is revealed of the one, is a revelation or unveiling of the other. So, as the beast and false prophet are represented to be antagonists of the Word of God, whatever is revealed of them as opposites, serves to throw light upon the character and offices of him with whom they are so directly at variance.

§ 557. As before suggested, we do not suppose the contest on the battle-field of Armageddon to be something in addition to the occurrences previously detailed ; it is rather a representation of the same contest between truth and error, under a different figure. We lost sight of the Rider of the white horse immediately after his first appearance, at the opening of the first seal, but the *overcoming* operations of the *Word of God* were then commenced. They were to be seen in the results of the opening of the sixth seal ; in the effects of the hail and fire mingled with blood, of the burning mountain cast into the sea ; of the star cast from heaven, “ burning, as it were a lamp.” They were to be seen in the stroke inflicted upon the sun, moon, and stars ; in the action of the scorpion-locusts, and in that of the Euphratean horsemen ; in the testimony of the two witnesses, and in the results of that testimony : and from the moment that the dragon began his persecution of the seed of the woman, when the seven-headed beast first rose from the sea, and the two-horned beast from the earth, the warfare was commenced. The same operations are to be seen in the proclamations of the heavenly herald, in the harvest, in the vintage, and in the process of the wine-press ; in the effusion of the seven vials of wrath, in the thunder and in the earthquake, and in the lightning and the hail ; in the war between the ten horns and the harlot, in that between the ten horns and the Lamb, and in the final judgment upon Babylon. In all these processes the Logos, or Word of God, was pursuing his victorious career, going forth

conquering (overcoming) every principle of error ; sustained by the same power of divine righteousness, although that power may not have been equally manifested. The Spirit of the mouth of the Lord was employed, although not always exhibited as a drawn sword.

Whatever shape the *adversary* may assume, and whatever may be the figure by which the contest is illustrated, the weapon of the victor is the same ;—the revelation of truth is the instrument of destroying error. The revelation of the *purpose* of God, as it is in truth, is the means of destroying every system or principle of doctrine inconsistent with it. In this respect it must be perceived, that as the new Jerusalem is an exhibition in detail of the purpose of God, as pertaining to the means of salvation ; and as the divine purpose or economy of grace is, in fact, the Word of God ; so the new Jerusalem coming down from heaven must be in substance equivalent, as a figure, to the appearance of the Rider of the white horse upon the field of battle. The two representations are exhibitions of the same Word (Logos) of God. The revelation of the new Jerusalem, rightly understood, like that of the Word or purpose of God, is the destined instrument of destroying every principle or doctrine inconsistent with the divine plan of salvation ; the Spirit and the bride performing the same part in the destruction of error, as is performed by the Word and the sharp sword. The *holy city* is thus a convertible term for the *Word of God* ; and is, accordingly, an appellation applicable to *the overcoming*, (the rider of the white horse.) It is, at the same time, that scheme of doctrine by which, and by which alone, the worship of God, in the true sense of the term, can be sustained, as by a pillar ; corresponding with the promise of Jesus in the address to the angel of the Church of Philadelphia : “ Him that *overcometh* (*the overcoming*) will I make a *pillar* in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out : and I will write upon him the name of my God, (King of kings,) and the name of the city of my God, new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God : and my new name,” (Jehovah our righteousness.)

The *overcoming* Word of God being identic with the new Jerusalem, and the new Jerusalem being the wife or bride of the Lamb, we see in the bridal array of the wife, prepared for the marriage feast, the fulfilment of another of these promises : “ He that *overcometh* (*the overcoming*) the same shall be clothed in white raiment : and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.” The exaltation of the overcoming Word on the great *white throne* may be considered a fulfilment of the latter portion of this promise.

As the bride or wife is identic with the Lamb, and the Lamb identic with Jesus, and Jesus himself is the morning-star, the promise to give the morning-star to him that *overcometh* is fulfilled in the manifestation, that the overcoming Word and the new Jerusalem are identic with the star itself.



So the promise of the participation of the tree of life is fulfilled in the manifestation, that that tree is a constituent element of the new Jerusalem, and that the new Jerusalem is identic with the overcoming Word. In like manner, the promise to participate in the hidden manna, (§ 110,) is fulfilled by the manifestation that the *overcoming* Word is identic with Jesus Christ, for he has declared himself to be the *true bread*, which came down from heaven; that is, the hidden manna. So, the promise, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things," is fulfilled by the manifestation of the identity of the overcoming Word with him, to whom the heathen was to be given for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession. In accordance with this construction, also, we may take the promise to receive the *white stone* to be fulfilled in manifesting the identity of the overcoming Word with him who is the elect, precious corner-stone—the only sure foundation of faith or hope.

§ 558. Jesus Christ is thus exhibited to us in this Apocalypse in the midst of the churches, and on the white cloud, as the Son of man; in the act of opening the sealed book, or of unfolding the mystery of redemption, as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Lamb as it had been slain; in the war in heaven, as the conqueror of the dragon; on the Mount Zion, as the Lamb triumphant; throughout the whole tissue of the narrative as *the overcoming*; and towards its close as the Word of God, as the bride or wife, as the new Jerusalem; and, finally, as the Lamb enthroned, the Son of God identic with God, occupying the same seat, and in effect that God who is all in all.

In the Son of man, we see him who became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in him. In the Lamb, as it had been slain, we see him who was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; in the conqueror of the dragon, him who satisfied the law, and overcame the accuser by the power of his blood. In the overcoming, (the Word of God,) whether exhibited under the figure of destructive earthly elements, or under that of vials of wrath, or that of a victorious warrior, or that of the new Jerusalem, (the bride,) we see the same purpose of sovereign grace: the latter figure (the holy city) exhibiting this *purpose* in all its details; and thus, by its ample exhibition of truth, proving in effect the same instrument in the destruction of error as that elsewhere represented as the sword of the mouth of the Word.

As the history of the overcoming (the Word) is part of the *unveiling* of Jesus, so also is the history of that which is overcome,—the beast, with his *aid*, the false prophet; these latter figures serving to give prominence to the illustration afforded by the former. The beast is the antagonist of the Word, as the dragon (the accuser) is the antagonist of the Lamb; and as the harlot, or Babylon, is the opposite of the wife, or new Jerusalem. The mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, (Rev. xvii. 7,)



is calculated, in proportion as it is unfolded, to place in high relief the opposite mystery of the Lamb or Word, and bride. We may derive, accordingly, a knowledge of the beast from a knowledge of his antagonist the Word ; and by this accession to our information, we obtain a further knowledge of Him who here unveils himself.

§ 559. *The overcoming* (the Word of God) is the *purpose* of sovereign grace to save *freely*, through the vicarious offering or imputed merits of Christ ; a purpose figuratively spoken of by Paul as the *cross* of Christ, the preaching of which, he says, is foolishness to them that perish, but the power of God to them that are saved, (1 Cor. i. 17, 18 ; Gal. v. 11 ;) a purpose, the only object of the disciple's glorying ;—to glory in the *cross* of Christ (Gal. vi. 15) being equivalent to glorying in the Lord : a purpose of *grace*, by which alone the sinner can be reconciled to his offended Judge, (Eph. ii. 16, Col. i. 20 ;) “ the blood of the cross,” and “ the blood of the Lamb,” being interchangeable expressions for the same propitiatory sacrifice. Of this *purpose*, Word, or *Cross*, (ξίλον, § 47,) the beast is the antagonist or *adversary* ;—the figure of a principle having a direct tendency to oppose the doctrine of a free salvation, through the vicarious offering of the Son of God. To this adverse principle we have given the appellation of *SELF*, because, in proportion to its operation on the mind, its tendency is to lead to a dependence upon one's own merits or righteousness—making the cross of Christ of none effect, and prompting the disciple to ascribe to himself, or to something in himself, the glory even of his eternal happiness ; making himself the author of his own salvation, and consequently assuming for *self* the position of the Deity, (§ 294.) It must be easy to perceive an exposure of this error to be equivalent to a revelation of the opposite of truth ; we have, therefore, no occasion to go out of our way to search for the connection between the particulars related of the beast and those we expect to meet with in a revelation of the true character and offices of Christ ; the narrative of one is part of the unveiling of the other.

The same is to be said of Babylon, or the harlot. As a mixed system, or a doctrinal system of mixed and confused principles, sustained by the blasphemous principle of *self*, the mystery of the woman is intimately blended with that of the beast ; they seem to be spoken of, in fact, as one mystery. The bride is a *help-meet* for the Lamb in the work of unfolding the mystery of sovereign grace ; and, by parity of symbolical representation, the harlot (Babylon) is a *help-meet* for the beast, in exhibiting the mixed, mercenary, confused, and selfish principles of the kingdom or system of the *enemy of the cross*. For this reason the particulars related of Babylon, both as a consort of the beast, and as an opposite of the bride, form a portion of the general doctrinal development, comprehended in the unfolding of the word, or economy of grace : the divine purpose once manifest in the flesh.

These several exhibitions thus uniformly tending to illustrate the work

and offices and character of the Son of God, we think the purpose of the book, as announced in its title, *the revelation or unveiling of Jesus Christ*, must be considered fully accomplished; the proposition laid down at the commencement of the work, "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him," being also (in what we apprehend to be the sense intended) fully sustained.

He comes, to the spiritual understanding, in the symbolical and figurative representations of this Apocalypse. It is here that every eye may see him; and such as he is represented here, he is seen by every one passing into that state of existence where the understanding must be opened to the knowledge of all mysteries and of all truth. In this Apocalypse Jesus comes, or is manifested, as the great propitiatory sacrifice, (the Lamb,) overcoming the powers of legal accusation; for which reason, as we apprehend, those powers are said to *wail* because of him. He comes as the sovereign purpose, (the Word,) saving through the imputation of his own righteousness, (his own right arm,) manifesting his victory over every pretension of human merit; for this reason, also, the tribes or *kindreds of the earth* (the elements of self-righteousness) *mourn* because of him. Their glory is departed. To God the Saviour, the Lord our righteousness, alone belongs the whole glory of the work of redemption, as well as of the salvation of every redeemed sinner.

The erroneous views to be combated, as we have remarked, (§ 552,) are those tending to create the belief that the disciple is to *overcome* the powers of condemnation by some works or merits of his own. To correct this error the manifestation is made, that there is but one overcoming principle or power; to wit, the divine purpose of sovereign grace—the will, *fiat*, or word of God—this one overcoming power being identic with "the Word made flesh," and identic also with God the Father—three manifestations of one God. "Speak the word only," said the believing centurion to Jesus, "and my servant shall be healed." So the disciple may say to his SOVEREIGN LORD, "Speak but the word, and my soul is saved." Let that be the *divine purpose*, the decision of sovereign grace, and it is enough. The revelation made by Jesus Christ of himself, while in the flesh, exhibits the process by which this *gracious purpose* is carried into effect; showing how God may be just, and yet justify the objects of his mercy. The revelation which Jesus makes of himself under the figure of the *bride* or *holy city* shows the abundance and *freeness* of this merciful provision; but the revelation which he makes of himself in the person of the WORD shows the power by which, and the principle upon which, the whole work is effected to be the *irresistible fiat of sovereign grace* alone. It is by the development of this truth—by the Word *revealed*—that the self-righteous errors represented by the beast and false prophet, and their forces, are overcome, (Rev. xix. 11–21.) It is by the *revelation* of the

same truth—the new Jerusalem coming down *out of heaven from God*, (Rev. xxi. 2, 10,) that the legal adversaries, Satan and the assailants of the beloved city, are destroyed ; the fire *from God out of heaven* devouring them all, (Heb. x. 27.) It is by the same *revealed* truth (the fire of the Word) that the pretensions of the *mixed system* are also destroyed, Rev. xvii. 16, and xviii. 8 ; and it is to the same divine revelation, we apprehend, that allusion is made in the Old Testament, in the descriptions given of the coming or manifestation of JEHOVAH himself, (Ps. l. 2, 3, xcvi. 3, 4 ; Dan. vii. 9, 10.)

§ 560. Such is the illustration afforded by this Apocalypse of the truth as it is in Jesus :—the word of salvation ; God's purpose of sovereign grace, the mystery hid from ages ; shadowed forth in the Old Testament ; exemplified in the life and actions of the blessed Redeemer, as narrated by the evangelists ; didactically set forth in his preaching, and in the writings of his apostles ; and finally unfolded in the pictorial vision with which the beloved disciple was so remarkably favoured.

The Spirit and the bride say, Come. The whole bearing of this Apocalypse is to exhibit Christ as the only and the all-sufficient Saviour ; to invite the sinner to lay hold on the hope set before him ; to show him the folly of depending on any merit or righteousness of his own ; and to show him that, while his only hope is in the work of salvation *freely* wrought for him, the design of this work, and of its revelation, is not to exalt man, but to glorify God ; to manifest that to God, the Redeemer as well as the Creator, alone redounds all the honour, and praise, and glory, resulting from the salvation of the disciple ; consequently, to the same God and Saviour the *eternal* gratitude and self-devotion of the individual saved is due, even as his reasonable service ; as it is said, (Ez. xi. 19,) A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you ;—this new heart and new spirit consisting, we believe, in that grateful motive of conduct which must result from a correct knowledge and a just appreciation of the work of salvation by *sovereign grace* ; a motive of conduct, a grateful love, which it is plain must endure for ever in that state where the alternate suggestions of hope and fear can no longer operate upon the mind.



## NOTE ON THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST.

There still remains a difficulty in defining the name or title to be ascertained from the number of the beast, and until this difficulty is removed we shall be sensible that that test is wanting, which, as we have suggested, (§ 316,) may be intended to indicate the correctness of the interpretation given to the history of this mysterious character. Our apprehension, as we expressed it, was, that the principle symbolized by the beast, must be first found from what is said of his character and history, and by these we were to be guided in our use of the number. According to the commonly received idea, we have been accustomed to think that the name sought for was to be ascertained by giving to each letter composing it the value represented by such letter, in the ancient mode of arithmetical calculation. It is only since the conclusion of this analysis, and since committing our remarks upon the last chapter to the press, that a different use of this number has been presented to our minds. Such as it is, we submit it to the consideration of those taking an interest in the subject; leaving them to apply the proposed interpretation of the name to the thoughts previously put forth, which it would be now too late for us to reconsider or to modify.

“Here is wisdom:” it is said, “Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and the number of him (or of it) is six hundred and sixty-six,” (χ ξ ς.)

We do not take this term *count* in an ordinary sense, (§ 315,) nor do we suppose the term *man* to be intended to designate literally an individual of the human species, nor the term *name* to express literally a *proper name*. There is no more occasion to be literal in the consideration of this passage, than in that of any other portion of the Apocalypse; no more occasion to give a literal construction to the term *man*, than to that of *beast*. The allusion of the term *count* is apparently to a superstitious notion of the people of the East, and, perhaps, of the whole known world, in the time of the apostles, that certain hidden things were to be discovered by a mystic combination of numbers. Here, then, it is said, is *true* wisdom, as distinguished from these vain pretensions. Here is a number having an important meaning attached to it. Let him that really possesses an understanding of sacred mysteries count the number, or *divine* from the number, the name or title of the thing designated by it; for it is the name of something represented as a *man*, or as a rational being.

The number in question (six hundred and sixty-six) is expressed in Greek by three letters of the alphabet: χ six hundred, ξ sixty, ς six. Let us suppose these letters to be the initials of certain names. As it was common with the ancients, in their inscriptions upon coins, medals, monuments, &c., to indicate names of distinguished characters by initial letters, and sometimes by an additional letter, where the initial might be considered insufficient, as *C. Caius*, *Cn. Cneus*.

The Greek letter χ (*ch*) is the initial of Χριστός, (Christ.) The letter ξ is the initial of ξύλον, (wood or tree,) figuratively put sometimes in the New Testament for the cross; and in Revelations applied to the tree of life, the spiritual cross. The last

letter,  $\varsigma$ , is equivalent to *st* ; but whether as an *s* or as an *st*, it is the initial of the word *Satanas*, *Satan*, or the *adversary*, (§ 444.) Taking the two first names in the genitive, and the last in the nominative, we have the following appellation, name, or title:  $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon \xi\upsilon\lambda\omicron\nu \sigma\alpha\tau\alpha\nu\tilde{\alpha}\varsigma$ , *the adversary of the cross of Christ*, a character corresponding with that of certain enemies of the truth described by Paul, Phil. iii. 19: "Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is their shame; who mind earthly things:"—pretended disciples, apparently, whose views in matters of faith must be the opposite of those set forth by the apostle in the former part of the chapter from which this description is quoted.

Any doctrine, or principle of doctrine, tending to represent the intervention of a divine propitiation as unnecessary; or militating with a belief and trust in the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus, as the only hope of salvation, must be an *adversary of the cross of Christ*. Of this character, we consider every principle of *self*-righteousness; every doctrine tending to exalt *self*, or to represent man as the author of his own salvation. No doctrine, or principle of doctrine, accordingly, can be admitted into the service of *self*, or form a constituent part of the system of self-dependence, unless it possess this leading feature of hostility to the atoning sacrifice and justifying righteousness of the Son of God. Such, we may suppose, figuratively speaking, to have been the opinion of the false prophet; for which reason he caused every subject of the beast to receive in his forehead, or in his hand, the mark, the name of the beast, or the *number* of his name; that is, the character of *selfishness*, the name of *self*, or the impress (the number) of an *adversary of the cross of Christ*;—these three marks being in fact so many equivalents—characteristic features of the same anti-Christian principles.

The doctrines of truth, on the other hand, possess especially the characteristic of glorifying God alone, giving to him the glory due unto his name; bearing in their foreheads the seal or mark of the *name* (§ 517) of the Father of the Lamb.

## APPENDIX.

### THE MAN OF SIN.

HAVING considered the ten-horned beast of the Apocalypse identic with the *man of sin*, described by Paul, it appears expedient to exhibit the train of reasoning, through the instrumentality of which our own views have been formed upon the subject. For this purpose, the following analytic sketch is subjoined:—

#### 2 THESS. ii. 3-12.

Let no man deceive you by any means: for (that day shall not come,) except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth (will let,) until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. (Even him,) whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Μὴ τις ὑμᾶς ἐξαπατήσῃ κατὰ μηδὲνα τρόπον· ὅτι, ἐὰν μὴ ἔλθῃ ἡ ἀποστασία πρῶτον καὶ ἀποκαλυφθῇ ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἁμαρτίας, ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας ὁ ἀντικείμενος καὶ ὑπεραιρόμενος ἐπὶ πάντα λεγόμενον θεὸν ἢ σέβασμα, ὥστε αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ [ὡς θεὸν] καθίσαι, ἀποδεικνύντα ἑαυτὸν, ὅτι ἐστὶ θεός. Οὐ μνημονεῖτε, ὅτι ἔτι ὢν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ταῦτα ἔλεγον ὑμῖν; Καὶ νῦν τὸ κατέχον οἴδατε, εἰς τὸ ἀποκαλυφθῆναι αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ ἑαυτοῦ καιρῷ. Τὸ γὰρ μυστήριον ἤδη ἐνεργεῖται τῆς ἀνομίας, μόνον ὁ κατέχων ἄρτι ἕως ἐκ μέσου γένηται. Καὶ τότε ἀποκαλυφθήσεται ὁ αἰνομος, ὃν ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς ἀναλώσει τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ καὶ καταργήσει τῇ ἐπιφανείᾳ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ· οὐδ' ἐστὶν ἡ παρουσία κατ' ἐνέργειαν τοῦ σατανᾶ ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει καὶ σημείοις καὶ τέρασι ψεύδους καὶ ἐν πάσῃ ἀπάτῃ τῆς ἀδικίας ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις, ἀνθ' ὧν τὴν ἀγάπην τῆς ἀληθείας οὐκ εἰδξαντο εἰς τὸ σωθῆναι αὐτούς. Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο πέμψει αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς ἐνέργειαν πλάνης, εἰς τὸ πιστεῦσαι αἰετοὺς τῷ ψεύδει, ἵνα κριθῶσι πάντες οἱ μὴ πιστεύσαντες τῇ ἀληθείᾳ, ἀλλ' εὐδοκῶσαντες ἐν τῇ ἀδικίᾳ.

In the preceding chapter of this epistle, the apostle had given a vivid description of the coming of the Lord, from the terms of which it was very



natural for the Thessalonians to suppose this coming to be an event taking place in a literal sense in their own day. It seems, besides, from other passages of the New Testament, to have been a very common apprehension of Christians of that age, that the final manifestation of Christ was something immediately at hand; hence, we may suppose that there was, with many, a degree of disappointment, and a wavering of their faith, and perhaps even on some occasions a relapse into paganism. By the scoffer it was said, What has become of the promise of his coming? while the impatient disciple exclaimed within himself, Why are his chariot wheels so long delayed? While others, hardened by the forbearance, used the language of the unfaithful servants: "Our Lord delayeth his coming." To guard against this disappointment and its effects, the explanation of the passage under consideration appears designed.

The word translated *now*, in our common version, at the commencement of this chapter, would be better rendered *but* or *and*; as it is the ordinary Greek conjunction *δέ*, (Lat. *autem*, G. & L.) With this alteration, bearing in mind that the division into chapters and verses is no part of the original composition, we perceive the connection between the two representations here;—as if the apostle had said, The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with flaming fire, for which cause we pray for you, &c., *but* we beseech you not to be shaken in your faith because he does not appear immediately; for you are to understand that, prior to his appearance, there must be a detection and exhibition of the existence of a spirit, power, or principle, of an entirely opposite character. The revelation of this opposing power, he tells them, is to be a preliminary operation in the manifestation of Christ. The apostle then explains further, that there is something which for a time *lets* or prevents, and which will let or prevent the making of this preliminary revelation. The inference, accordingly, is, that although the Lord Jesus delayeth his coming, this coming, whatever be its nature, will certainly take place. Meantime, the attention of the disciple is to be directed to the detection of the opposing spirit here described, as this detection is to be instrumental in the revelation so much desired.

'Except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.'—The word rendered *falling away*, *ἀποστασία*, has been adopted in our language, (apostacy,) and perhaps expresses, as it is commonly understood, all that was intended to be conveyed in this passage by the original: Except there come first an *apostacy*—a falling away from the truth—some egregious error in matters of faith. The primary meaning of the term is applicable to the conduct of an individual leaving his party, or to the revolt of a number of individuals against the lawful authority; but, from the connection, it is evident that it is not in this primary sense, but in something analogous to it, that the word is to be taken. The primary mean-

ing of the term, however, is expressive of an open revolt or rebellion, something declared or manifested, as distinguished from a mutinous disposition, or secret conspiracy. So, we suppose the *apostacy* here contemplated to be not merely the existence of a departure from the truth, but the *manifestation* of such a departure ;—the falling away may have existed in fact for a long time ; as another apostle says, ‘ Even now there are many Antichrists.’ The coming of the Lord was not delayed in the time of Paul, because the error itself did not then exist, but because it was not yet openly manifested. There was already a falling away or departure from the faith amongst many who professed to be followers of Christ ; but the *apostacy*, or open *repudiation* of the *truth*, was yet to take place.

‘ And that man of sin be revealed.’—The *apostacy* consists in the revelation of the man of sin, not merely in his existence ; as the open revolt of a party is a revelation of the previous rebellious spirit of the conspirators. The man of sin may have been in existence from the creation of the world, but in the time of the Thessalonians he was yet to be revealed. The whole connection of the passage shows us that this *man of sin* is not literally a *man*, or *human being* ; it is something personified as a man. Common sense immediately suggests this application of the term. If not a man literally, neither can it be any body of men, in a literal sense, as the description subsequently given would not apply to such a body or collection of human beings. To understand the figure, however, we must understand what would be the signification of the term *man of sin*, in a literal sense. It is evident that it is not merely a sinner, or the sinner, that is here contemplated ; for the revelation had been made of old time, and was so referred to repeatedly by this apostle, that *all have sinned* ; that there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not. Christ, it is said, came into the world to save sinners, even the chief of sinners ; yet we cannot suppose he came to save that which is here denominated the *man of sin* ; especially, when it is said in the eighth verse of this chapter, that this *wicked* is to be consumed and destroyed by the coming of the Lord.

The Greek term *ἀμαρτία*, primarily signifies *a missing* or *mistaking*; (Donnegan ;) a taking of that which is false for that which is true, (*error*, Thuc. i. 32, Rob. Lex.) The epithet here employed might, therefore, more properly be rendered, *the man of error* ; the man of sin of Paul thus corresponding with “ the spirit of error” (*τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πλάνης*) of the apostle John ;—the first appellation expressing the nature of the thing spoken of, the last the nature of its influence upon others, (the power of delusion.) It is not merely error in the general that is here contemplated, it is a peculiar error in matters of religious doctrine, the worst of errors ;—the fountain and source of all errors—an erroneous principle, from which, perhaps, every departure from Christian faith originates.

This man of sin is also termed "the son of perdition." The son or child must be the offspring;—this evil spirit would seem to be, therefore, the *offspring* of perdition, rather than the parent or cause of it. But, by metonymy, the term perdition may be put for that which causes perdition; thus this evil spirit is the offspring of that which causes *perdition*. That which causes perdition, in a doctrinal sense, is the spirit or power of accusation, under the law bringing the sinner to justice, subjecting him to the full penalty of his transgressions;—a power spoken of in Scripture as Satan, or the Devil—the legal adversary or accuser. This man of sin may be, accordingly, considered the offspring of Satan, the accuser; owing his existence to Satan, as the beast from the sea, in the book of Revelation, was indebted for his power to the dragon. The appellation, *son of perdition*, occurs nowhere else in the Scriptures, except where it is applied to the traitor Judas, and where it would seem to indicate an individual *destined to perdition*, (John xvii. 12 :) "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, none of them is lost, but the *son of perdition*; that the scripture might be fulfilled." We cannot suppose, however, that the term, as used by Paul, is intended merely to indicate the man of sin as destined to perdition, for this is afterwards expressly described. There may be, nevertheless, a strong analogy between the characteristics of the traitorous apostle and those of this traitorous principle; the one betraying his Master with a kiss, the other betraying the cause of the Redeemer under the garb of professed adherence to the faith of the gospel.

'Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped.'—To make one's self equal with God, according to the Jewish construction of the crime, is blasphemy against God; and such we have supposed to be the blasphemy of the ten-horned beast of the Apocalypse, (Rev. xiii. 4–6.) He made himself, both directly and indirectly, through the false prophet, and through the fabrication of his *image*, an object of worship; his character corresponding very precisely in this respect with that of the man of sin. In fact, we can hardly read the descriptions of these two subjects without taking their identity as granted.

In remarking upon the apocalyptic beast, we have shown that if a man represent himself to be the efficient author of his own salvation by his own righteousness or merits, or by some propitiation of his own, he virtually makes himself in appearance equal with God. We may add here, that he makes himself, in the same sense, superior to God; for if the law of God condemn, it is God that condemns; and if man justify when God condemns, man must be superior to God;—the case supposed by the prophet being reversed, (Is. l. 8,) as also that stated by the apostle, (Rom. viii. 33, 34.) The law of God condemns the sinner. If we suppose this sinner, then, to make some propitiation of his own equal to counteracting this con-



demnation, we suppose him to be even more powerful than God himself. Thus claiming the honour or glory of his own redemption, instead of ascribing that glory to God, he *opposeth* God ; and professing to justify himself, and overcome the requisitions of divine justice by some propitiatory power or strength of his own, he exalteth himself above all that is called God. Man, making himself in his own estimation the efficient cause of his salvation, makes his own *self* the object of his own adoration. If, for example, a man say, ‘ God makes me an object of his favour, because I fear him, or because I trust in him,’ such a man makes himself the *source* of the benefit he receives. So if he say, ‘ I am saved through Christ *on account* of my faith, or *on account* of my repentance,’ he makes his own faith or repentance the cause, and himself the efficient author of his own salvation, although he may professedly ascribe that salvation to Christ. If he say, ‘ I am saved, indeed, by *grace* ; but God predestinated me to this favour before I was created, because he foresaw that there would be in me some good quality *deserving* of it ;’ the disciple here again represents himself as the efficient cause of the *grace* bestowed, and thanks himself rather than God for the blessed effects of his own goodness ; although, perhaps, he professes at the same time *to thank God that he is not as other men are*.

‘ So that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing,’ &c.—As worship consists in service, and the characteristic of a service depends upon the motive of action, he who depends upon his own merits, can be actuated by no other motive than to serve and to glorify himself. He thus puts himself in the place or seat of God, in his own mind or estimation ; which mind or estimation is, or should be, the temple of God. As it was said of the kingdom of God, ‘ Behold, the kingdom of God is within you ;’ so it may be said of his temple, ‘ Behold, the temple of God is within you.’ It is something depending upon the state of one’s mind. The disciple, whose mind is so renewed that his only motive of conduct is to serve God, has the temple of God, as it were, within himself ; and in that temple he worships God, in spirit and in truth ; as it was said of such by the apostle, (2 Cor. vi. 16 :) “ Ye are the temple of the living God ;” the body of the disciple by a figure of speech being put for his mind. If then we suppose the spirit of error so to take possession of the mind of the disciple, as to make the interest and glory of *self* the only motive of conduct, that *self* takes the place of God *in his temple*—sitting in the temple of God, showing himself as God ;—corresponding with the blasphemous pretensions of the evil principle we have contemplated as the *adversary of the cross*, represented by the apocalyptic ten-horned beast.

‘ Remember ye not,’ &c.—It would appear from these two verses, that the apostle had some time before given the Thessalonians a few hints, at least, of the existence of this evil principle, and of its destined revelation ;

but he had not, till now, so distinctly assigned to this cause the delay in the corresponding revelation of Jesus Christ. "But now," he says, "ye know what withholdeth;" that is, apparently, what withholdeth the coming of the day of Christ, viz., the necessity of the previous revelation of this man of sin. The coming of the day of Christ is withheld, that this *apostacy* or manifest departure from the faith may be exhibited; which manifestation is to take place at a certain appointed time, (in its season,) and not before. The departure from the faith, however, has already taken place; existing in the time of the apostle at least in an incipient state. Its growth to maturity we may suppose to be requisite for its *revelation* or development. As the extreme to which an error is carried is frequently the means of exhibiting its fallacy, so this maturity of extreme error may be set down as its season when it is to be revealed; as the season or time of the coming of Christ, (Rev. xxii. 10.) must be also the season or time when this wicked (being revealed) is to be destroyed by the brightness of that coming. The revelation of this man of sin, in the meantime, we may suppose to be something progressive—gradually approximating to its time.

'For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth, [hindereth,] will let, until he be taken out of the way.'—There can be no doubt but that this mystery of iniquity is identic with what was before termed the man of sin—two ways of speaking of the same thing. The man of sin we suppose to be an erroneous, delusive principle of doctrine, or spirit of error; and the mystery of iniquity is the complicated operation of this spirit of error.

The word translated *iniquity* (ἀνομία) is the substantive corresponding with the adjective ἄνομος, rendered immediately afterwards *wicked*; and to preserve the connection, we should say, The mystery of *wickedness* doth already work, &c.; and then shall that *wicked* be destroyed; or else we should say, And then shall that *iniquitous* be destroyed. The adjective rendered *wicked*, however, is precisely the same as that translated, 1 Cor. ix. 21, *without law*—where the apostle says, to them without law he became as without law, &c.; and where we certainly could not substitute either the word *wicked* or *iniquitous*. The adverb ἄνομως, which occurs only once in the New Testament, is rendered in our common version (Rom. ii. 12) *without law*: "For as many as have sinned *without law*, shall also perish *without law*." We could hardly say, As many as have sinned wickedly, shall also perish wickedly. The same word, ἄνομος, is rendered 2 Peter ii. 8, *unlawful*; 1 Tim. i. 9, *lawless*; Acts ii. 23, *wicked*; but evidently meaning *lawless* or *unlawful*—Jesus having been crucified or slain by *unlawful* hands, or *without law*: contrary to law, having done nothing amiss. So, Luke xxii. 37, Mark xv. 28, the same adjective, used substantively, is rendered *transgressors*, where it should have been translated the

*lawless*. These are all the passages in which the adjective occurs in the New Testament, and in all these the prevailing idea is, that this *wicked* is something opposed to law, or without law. Corresponding with this is the derivation of the word *ἄνομος*, from *νόμος*, law or rule, with the privative prefixed; and *Ἀνομία*, *want of laws*, *lawlessness*, (Donnegan,) from the adjective *νόμος*, *νομία*, *legitimus*, (Suicerus;) legitimate, with the privative *ἀ* forming the word *ἀνομία*, illegitimate—unsanctioned by law, contrary to rule.

There can be no question but that an unlawful act is a wicked act, and a lawless person is a wicked person, but in the passage under consideration neither acts nor persons are the things spoken of. It is a *mystery* which is thus described as *without law*, or *lawless*.

The term *νόμος*, signifying law or rule, is of pastoral origin, and was primarily applied to the partition of lands, or to the land-marks by which pasturages set off to different proprietors were divided. It may be employed therefore to designate any rule of right. In matters of practice it applies to the moral law, or to the law of the land; and in matters of faith or doctrine, to the line or rule of *truth*. Thus a *lawless* doctrinal mystery, or a mystery of doctrine *without law*, is a mystery or system the opposite of truth. The mystery of *iniquity*, (τὸ μυστήριον τῆς ἀνομίας,) and the *wicked* (ὁ ἄνομος) are, accordingly, only different appellations of the same spirit or principle of *error*—something in matters of doctrine opposite to the standard of truth; corresponding with the interpretation we have given to the term *sin*, (ἁμαρτία,) as applied to the *man of sin*. The terms *ἁμαρτία* and *ἀνομία* may be considered indeed nearly interchangeable. πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν καὶ τὴν ἀνομίαν ποιεῖ καὶ ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία, (1 John iii. 3,) “He that doeth sin, doeth *iniquity*,” and sin is *iniquity*, which, applied to the present case, confirms our supposition that the error represented by the man of sin is the same as that represented by the mystery of iniquity; the nature of the iniquity (*iniquitas*, from *iniquus*, uneven) or departure from the *straight line*; depending upon the thing spoken of. In matters of morals, it is sin in the ordinary sense of the term; in matters of doctrine, it is a deviation from the rule or standard of *truth*.

This mystery or spirit of error was in operation in the time of Paul. It was not prevented from *working*, but there was something in the way which prevented or hindered it from being revealed. Using the light derived, as we think, from the Apocalypse on this subject, we suppose this something, by which the *revelation* of the mystery of error is let or kept back, to be the power represented in the revelation by the *false prophet*. As the man of sin—the son of perdition—is equivalent to the ten-horned beast from the sea, so the power by which this man of sin is concealed, enabled to work without being recognized, is the two-horned beast from the land, the false inter-



preter, the misconstruction of the language of revelation. No sooner is this misconstruction taken away, than the mystery of iniquity or of error is revealed. On the other hand, so long as this misconstruction prevails, so long as man is taught by it to erect an image of his own righteousness, to make of *self* an idol in his own mind, so long that *self* will occupy in the human heart the place of God ; sitting in the temple of God and claiming the devotion and honour due only to God ; saying with Lucifer, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds : I will be like the Most High, (Is. xiv. 14.) So long, too, will the mystery of iniquity remain concealed.

The same mystery was at work typically in the heart of Cain when he offered the fruits of the ground (the symbol of human merit) as a propitiatory sacrifice. It was at work in the heart of Nebuchadnezzar, when he glorified himself. It was at work in the heart of Herod, when he assumed to himself that glory which he should have ascribed to God. It was at work in the minds of the Pharisees and of the Galatians. In all such instances the error would have been dispelled if the light of the gospel had been brought to bear upon it, free from any misinterpretation ; but, although this light, to a certain extent, was in the world previous to the coming of Jesus Christ, men loved darkness rather than light : they preferred resting upon their own merits, and therefore perverted even the portion of truth with which they were favoured. So it was with the Galatians : the mystery of error with them would have been detected, if the gospel had not been misinterpreted ; and so it has been since with the various denominations of the Christian church. The same mystery has been at work with some in their strict adherence to certain forms and ceremonies ; with others, in their zeal for certain standards of doctrine, with others in their fastings and prayers, their will-worships and voluntary humiliations : with others even in their alms-giving, their philanthropy, their religious zeal ; and others still have shown it in their punctilious attention, or such professed attention, to the requirements of justice and moral duty. Whenever these things have proceeded from a motive of exalting *self*, or with the view of making one's self the author of one's own salvation, the mystery of the man of sin has been at work ; while the reason why the promulgation of the gospel has not detected the error is, that such a detection has been *let* or prevented by the misconstruction put upon the language of revelation.

‘ And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth.’—The word translated spirit (πνεῦμα) might perhaps be better rendered *breath*, to be in keeping with the figurative term *mouth* ; for neither mouth nor breath are literal terms. The breath of the mouth of the Lord must be the utterance—the words of the Lord—that is, the Lord's revelation of truth, spiritually and properly understood. So it is said, Is. xi. 4, of the branch from the root of Jesse, “ He shall smite the

earth with the rod of his *mouth*, and with the breath of his *lips* shall he slay the wicked ;” the thing to be smitten and the thing to be slain being of a nature to suffer by this action of divine revelation. As the beast *self* (the adversary of the cross of Christ) is slain by the sword of the *mouth* of the Word of God, not by a sword of the hand, so *the wicked* spoken of by Isaiah is something to be slain by *language*, (the breath of the lips)—the language of divine inspiration ; and so the wicked spoken of by Paul is something to be consumed by the same language, the breath of the mouth of the Lord, and to be destroyed by that manifestation of truth, which is said to be the brightness of the coming, or *parousia*, of the Lord—τῇ ἐπιφανείᾳ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ.

The taking away of the misconstruction which hindered the revelation of error, and the manifestation of truth which destroys that error, we suppose to be simultaneous operations. It is not said by whom or by what that which *lets* is to be taken out of the way, but the inference is very plain that the operation must be that of divine power alone. We do not suppose the spirit or breath of the mouth of the Lord to be a *new* revelation. It is the written revelation already made, which, previous to the catastrophe here contemplated, had been so veiled or covered by *misconstruction*, or literal interpretation, that its proper spiritual sense was not permitted to operate. When this obstacle is removed, the same revealed word operates with its full power ;—as it is said by the prophet, the breath of the Lord is a stream of brimstone ; that is, the revealed word of the Lord is an unquenchable *fire*, and by this fire, which tries every doctrinal production, the mystery of *error* is to be consumed.

‘ And shall destroy (bring to an end) with the brightness of his coming.’—The term here translated *brightness*, (ἐπιφάνεια,) implies a shining forth, or exhibition of, and is thus well rendered in the Latin, in this place, by the word *illustratio* (G. & L.)—the *parousia*, or manifestation of the truth as it is in Jesus, spoken of as his coming, *illustrating* every subject of revelation connected with it ; and, by this illustration, destroying the error or mystery of error denominated the Man of Sin. This illustration of the *parousia*, or coming of the Lord, performs the same work in destroying error as that effected by the spirit or breath of the mouth of the Lord. The figures are interchangeable. To consume is to destroy, and the breath or spirit of the Lord’s mouth is identic with the *illustration* of his *parousia* or spiritual manifestation.

‘ (Even him) whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders.’—The *coming* of this *evil one* is expressed by the same Greek word (παρουσία) as that applied to the *coming* of Christ. The term, as we have noticed, signifies the manifestation of an

actual presence, not the *act* of coming. It is not the progress of the man of sin, as in the act of approaching, that is here spoken of; it is his revelation. He manifests himself after the manner of Satan, or appears when manifested to operate in the same *manner* as Satan. As we apprehend, the expression *after the working*, applies rather to the manner, or character, of Satan's operations than to the degree of it which is afterwards described.

Satan is the legal adversary or accuser of man—the drift of all his working is to procure the condemnation of the sinner. He is the opposite of the Saviour, as the great red dragon was the opposite of Michael. The spirit of error—the man of sin—when manifested or revealed, (in his *parousia*,) will be seen to work or operate in the same way. The tendency of the mystery of iniquity is to work condemnation instead of salvation; as the adversary of the cross of Christ, *self*, (the ten-horned beast,) sets aside the means of redemption in Christ, and places the disciple in a position of dependence upon his own merits—a position under the law obnoxious to the penalty of the law, and subjected to the unmitigated power of the accuser. The man of sin, or mystery of iniquity, also works by receiving, like the beast, the power and great authority of the *legal* adversary.

‘With all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish.’\*—As all the *world* wondered after the beast, and as the false prophet performed great miracles *in the sight of men*, (Rev. xiii. 3 and 13,) so the *man of sin* operates with great power, &c., amongst, or in the sight of, the victims of his delusion. He does not really perform miracles, but he appears to them to do so. We do not suppose in either of these cases that the wonders and signs alluded to are prodigies, or that they appear such in a literal sense. The subject treated of is a mystery, a system or spirit of error—something to be destroyed by divine revelation, (the breath of the mouth of the Lord;) consequently these signs and wonders are something in keeping with the whole matter. The whole mystery is a doctrinal system of delusion; and the tendency of this delusion, we apprehend, is to make men believe that they are successfully working out their own righteousness in their efforts at self-justification. The signs and lying wonders, accordingly, are such as represent the power of this delusive system to be above every other power in converting and saving the soul from death; as those who went about in old time to establish their own righteousness, who justified themselves before God, no doubt professed to maintain the superiority of such views and doctrines by their wonderful effects upon the character and minds of their converts.

\* *Τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις*, precisely the appellation applied to those to whom *the preaching of the cross* is said to be foolishness: 1 Cor. i. 18.



The expression, "deceivableness of unrighteousness," affords some key to the nature of this delusion. We should not speak of the deceit or deceivableness of immorality, or injustice, in the ordinary sense of the terms, because we may say there is no mistaking them—they appear what they are, however those practising such immorality or injustice may endeavour to conceal it. We do not suppose such to be the kind of *unrighteousness* here spoken of; we suppose it to be something to be understood in a doctrinal sense. There is one kind of righteousness which justifies the disciple in the sight of God; this is the imputed righteousness of Christ. In this there is no deceit or deceivableness. But there is a pretended righteousness of man, which is the opposite of the true, and which is in fact unrighteousness. In this self-righteousness there is great deceivableness; its whole character is that of a delusion; its peculiar feature is that of laying hold of every pretext by which man may be supposed capable of justifying himself. The self-deceived and self-deceiving errorist is thus especially open to the arts of the *adversary* in his exhibitions of the requisitions of the law to be fulfilled by the works of man; or, if not fulfilled, to be satisfied by some propitiation of man's providing. Corresponding with this, the Greek word rendered *unrighteousness* is derived from a term signifying justice or righteousness, preceded with a privative ( $\alpha$ ) causing it to signify the opposite—something without justice or righteousness—having no righteousness in it; incapable of affording the means of justification.

'Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved,' &c.—Christ is the way and the truth and the life—there is no salvation except through his intervening merits; this is *the truth* for which the self-righteous have no love, or the love of which they do not receive. They prefer relying upon their own ability, their own strength, and for this reason, as it appears from this passage, they are left subject to the delusion in which they delight. They have pleasure in that pretended righteousness which is the opposite of God's righteousness. Being ignorant of *his* righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God, (Rom. x. 3.) They do not obey the truth, because they have their own glory and not the glory of God in view. For this reason they readily give credit to the signs and lying wonders, and plausible pretensions of the mystery of iniquity.

'And for this cause,' &c.; or, as the clause might be rendered, And through this (instrumentality) God *sends* them a *working* of error to their trusting to a falsehood, that all those not trusting to the truth, but taking pleasure in unrighteousness, may be *judged*. That is, as we apprehend, that by the extreme of delusion which they give in to, the condemnation of their error may be made manifest. The verb rendered *shall send*, according

to some editions, is in the present tense, *πέμπει*. The delusion sent is not something in addition to the mystery of iniquity, but it is that mystery itself. Men are prone to prefer a dependence upon their own merits : to show them their folly in this respect, therefore, this delusion is allowed to work for a certain period. The word translated delusion is the same substantive, and in the same case, as that translated *of error*, 1 John iv. 6 ; and the word rendered by the adjective *strong*, is the same substantive which, in this chapter, and in every other passage of the New Testament, is rendered by the term *working*, except only Col. ii. 12, where it is translated *operation*. The verb *πιστεύω*, commonly rendered *believe*, signifies primarily and pre-eminently a *trusting to* or *relying upon* the object of belief ; and the verb *καίρω*, rendered *damned*, is that rendered uniformly elsewhere *judged*, or condemned. It has not even the intensive *κατά* prefixed to the verb, where it more particularly expresses condemnation. The term *damned* occurs but in two other places of the Scriptures, according to our common version, and in both of these it is a translation of the verb everywhere else rendered *condemn* or *condemned*.

The distinction is the more important because we commonly associate with the term *damned* a state of hopeless irremediable punishment, whereas a culprit *condemned* is still supposed to be an object of mercy. We think the purport of the passage under consideration teaches us that the mystery of error is allowed to work, and is even *sent* to work, to render the state of condemnation of the unbeliever manifest ; but not to cause his final perdition, as an addition to some other cause. He that believeth not, it is said, (John iii. 18,) is condemned already, (*ἤδη κέκρίται*,) because he hath not believed in (relied upon) the name of the only begotten Son of God. So long as the sinner remains in unbelief, he must remain in the state of condemnation : the working of the mystery of error does not add to the condemnation, but it renders it manifest ; as the proof that one *has pleasure* in a dependence upon his own righteousness is equally a demonstration that he does not believe on, or rely upon, the merits of the Son of God, and consequently he must be, as it is said, *condemned already*.

Such we believe to be the purport of the sketch given by Paul of the character and working of the man of sin ; a sketch in every particular corresponding, we think, with what is related in the Apocalypse of the ten-horned beast, except that the latter is a more minute and detailed account than the former. Like the beast, the man of sin is something existing and reigning in the human heart. Like the beast, the man of sin usurps the place of God in the mind of his subjects or deluded votaries. Like the beast, the man of sin owes his predominance to the power of the legal accuser ; and like the beast, the man of sin is the opponent of God's plan of salvation, the

enemy of the righteousness of faith, and *the adversary of the cross of Christ*. Both make themselves objects of worship; both virtually speak blasphemy, and both are at last consumed by the fire of revealed truth; the one destroyed by the breath of the mouth of the Lord, scripturally spoken of as a stream of brimstone, and as a fiery flame, and the other is doomed to the lake of fire and brimstone—an everlasting burning.

THE END.









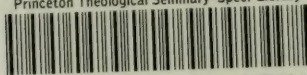




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